The Straight Path Publications

Exposing the reality of the Salafi sect

- The Four Madhabs
- Taqlid and Ijtihad – Why is it necessary to follow a madhab?
- The four Imams
- ISIS – A derivative of Salafism
- Refuting the Salafi Scholars (includes Albani, Bin Baaz and Uthaymeen
- Ibn Taymiyyah and the Deviated Salafi beliefs
- Refuting Tajseem and Direction for Allah
- Salafi beliefs
- Tawassul and Waseelah
- Deviated sects
- The correct Aqeedah

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Introduction

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. Peace, blessings, tranquillity and salutations are upon our blessed prophet (PBUH). Mercy and bliss be upon his magnanimous companions who strove with their lives, wealth and energies to convey his divine message to the rest of humanity. Appreciation, award and benediction be upon those scholars who devoted their lives to consolidate the message of the deen by clarifying, propagating and protecting the Quran and Sunnah. May the help of Allah be upon those individuals who accept and follow the pious predecessors with admiration for their efforts in preserving the Deen. Finally, may rectification, guidance and reformation be for those who deny, dishonour and disregard these nobles, whom Allah, the Almighty, and All wise accepted for the service and cause of His sacred, sanctified and pristine Deen.

Who are the Salafis?

In recent times, a new group of people called the "*Salafis*", '*ahle-hadith* or '*wahabis'* emerged. In the latter part of the **18th** century, this assembly of ultra-conservative extremist individuals started spreading their beliefs throughout Arabia. The Salafi doctrine is centred on the concept of looking back to the *salaf* (pious predecessors). Despite the fact that they claim to follow the *salaf*, nevertheless they go against them. We will provide evidences towards this later in the book.

Salafism shows an intense antagonism towards **Madhabs** (schools of thought). Throughout history, majority of Muslim scholars have been assigned to a school of thought. However, the Salafis have been retaliating against the concept of following any of the *four* madhabs. In fact, more so among the youth, who lack depth of understanding. Due to being intellectually immature they are quickly entrapped by these antagonists. The reason is that the front is very appealing. Any youth who wishes to make a change from irreligiousness to piety, and develops a desire to practise upon the Quraan and the Sunnah (and this normally happens by the virtue of Dawah and Tabligh), is quickly pursed by these people. After entangling him in their nets, and misleading him into thinking that most practises are bidah (innovations), they render him impractical and useless. Consequently, he only remains good in raising objections against all and sundry. In the United Kingdom, some of these trends began taking root.

It is our hope that this book will help refute their claims. As Qiyamah approaches, many fitnahs (evil and corruption) will appear. These fitnahs will increase as the hour draws nearer, and as we go further away from the period of our Beloved Prophet (PBUH), it will result in the ummah being split up into many groups. Those groups, who have gone astray, were either from amongst those who discredited sahabah or from those who abandoned the concept of TAQLID of the four great Imams. In other words, one who does not make TAQLID of one of the four imams is on the path towards Ilhad (deviance).

I would like to emphasise the point that the majority of the esteemed 'Ulama' of the Ummah were **Muqalids** of one of the four imams. Allamah Suyyuti (may allah be pleased with him) was a great Shafii scholar.

Once he decided to leave the confides of following his selected madhab. After a short period of time, he discovered the evil consequences thereof, repented and resumed making ***taqlid*** of Imam Shafi. During the time of the prophet (PBUH) everyone was either a **muqallid** (a person who does taqlid) or a **mujtahid** (a person who does **ijtihad**). Imam Ghazali (may allah be pleased with him) once said that Taqlid in reality is a shield of one's Imaan.

One senior ghair muqallid imam from Amritsar, India, admitted that many people left the confines of Islam due to not being a muqalid.

"And the last part of my Ummah will abuse the first part of it". After reading this hadith, I became apprehensive and anxious as this saying of the beloved (PBUH) indicated the end of times. The truth of the matter is that following an imam is following the divine Shariah , Sunnah and Quran. The Imam is an essential part of the system in order to decipher rulings and to ensure that we follow the correct judgement. The sahaba used to follow ijtihad in rulings and would be guided and inspired towards only that which is correct. As well as this, the companions would provide their opinion on a certain religious matter. If the concept of the four imams performing ijtihad is redundant then how come the sahabas confirmed and clarified hadith. Centuries have passed wherein the Ummah was righteous, guided and aided. Therefore it is paramount for us to also maintain the path which the pious predecessors tread and were rightly guided.

As well as this, another point I would like to mention is the fact that these misguided assembly of people call themselves 'ahle-hadith' or 'salafis'. The reason for this is because they determine the term 'wahabis' to be colloquial and informal despite the fact that they stemmed from a man name Abdul Wahhab who was from Najd, Saudi Arabia. They claim that their methodology of Islam is the only true way by titling themselves as the **Saved Sect**. In some cases, they even call people who follow a madhab *mushriks*. Moreover, salafis like to be known as 'the people of Hadith'. In spite of being called this, they sometimes use hadith in the wrong context by totally disregarding the metaphorical and figurative meanings of them. These points will be elaborated further throughout this treatise, In-sha-allaah.

The salafi creed is based upon three individuals. Imam Abdul Aziz bin Baaz, Shaykh Uthaymeen and Shaykh Nasir Albani. These persons have made mistakes in the field of Aqeedah (Beliefs) and Fiqh (Jurisprudence). A chapter of this book will be devoted to refuting their unethical and atrocious claims as well as shedding some light on this situation.

Salafis like to reference themselves to Ibn Taymiyyah (May Allah Have Mercy Upon Him) and Ibn Qayyim (May Allah Have Mercy Upon Him). Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim were both controversial scholars who had many opposing views. However, they never claimed the ideologies and the philosophies that the Salafis claim today. Ibn Taymiyyah has written a book in defence of those who follow a Madhaib. The Salafis like to accept the notorious views whilst disregarding the excellent work provided by these two respected scholars. In actuality these scholars made mistakes in some fields of Aqeedah and Fiqh. In some cases, they even go against some of the teachings of these two controversial yet esteemed scholars. This topic will also be discussed in this book. May Allah have mercy upon them both and accept their efforts towards the Deen.

Dr Yasir Qadhi – an ex Salafi – agreed that the movement was very extreme, hostile and negative towards interpretation of some rulings. All in all, the so called **saved sect** has many flaws which will all be thoroughly scrutinised. It is vital that the Ummah is aware of these fitnahs and follow the true methodology of the salaf (pious predecessors).

MADHABS

A madhhab is a school of thought within fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). The word *madhhab* is derived from an Arabic word meaning “to go” or “to take as a way” In the first 150 years of Islam, there were numerous madhahib, most of which have become extinct or merged with other schools. The Amman Message, which was endorsed in 2005 by prominent Islamic scholars around the world, recognized four Sunni schools (*Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali*).

The Hanafi school was founded by Abu Hanifa an-Nuʿman. It is followed by Muslims in the Levant, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Western Lower Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, the Balkans and by most of Russia's Muslim community. There are movements within this school such as Barelvis and Deobandi, which are concentrated in South Asia.

The Maliki school was founded by Malik ibn Anas. It is followed by Muslims in North Africa, West Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, in parts of Saudi Arabia and in Upper Egypt. In the past, it was also followed in parts of Europe under Islamic rule, particularly Islamic Spain and the Emirate of Sicily.

The Shafi'i school was founded by Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i. It is followed by Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Eastern Lower Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Jordan, Palestine, the Philippines, Singapore, Somalia, Thailand, Yemen, Kurdistan, and the Mappilas of Kerala and Konkani Muslims of India. It is the official school followed by the governments of Brunei and Malaysia.

The Hanbali school was founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal. It is followed by Muslims in Qatar, most of Saudi Arabia and minority communities in Syria and Iraq. The majority of the Salafist movement claims to follow this school. However, many hanbali scholars have refuted them due to them being ghair-muqalideen and not following some of the most basic principles of the hanbali madhab.

The difference found in the four Schools of Islamic law (Hanafi, Shafi, Maliki and Hanbali) in this nation is a huge blessing and an enormous virtue. It has a subtle hidden wisdom the intelligent are able to grasp, but the ignorant are blind of.

Is Following One Of The Four Madhabs Necessary? *A Self-Assessment*

1. All the sacred verses and hadith are in Arabic. The four Imams were experts in the Arabic language and I am not.

2. The four Imams lived in an age that was described by the Prophet (pbuh) as the most blessed of Islamic ages. He (pbuh) said: The best of my Umma are those of my generation, then the (generation) that follows them and then the (generation) that follows them (Sahih al-Bukhari). Obviously, I cannot claim to have this distinguished credential.

3. All four Imams were attested as being the most God-fearing and pious of people by thousands of leading Ulama (Scholars).

4. Thousands of scholars throughout Islamic history considered the opinions of the Imams to be the most superior and refined understanding of the Qur'an and Sunna. Not a fraction of these numbers have ever attested to my wisdom or scholarly credentials

5. The four Imams have an extraordinary track record. That is, the whole Umma embraced their opinions for over a thousand years. Throughout the Muslim world, Muslims followed one of the four schools [see last section]. My view(s) cannot claim this profound acceptability. The companion Ibn Masud said: That which the Muslims deem to be good, is good with Allah (Musnad Imam Ahmad). The odd opinions I may concoct do not have this solid recommendation.

6. In so many matters of life I only feel at ease if I get an expert's advice. I turn to doctors, mechanics, architects and many other specialists to tell me what to do. My religion is the most important thing to me, thus it makes sense to rely on the greatest intellects of the Umma to guide me

7. A school is the best way to protect the Deen from untrained individuals twisting it to suit ulterior motives and desires. I do not know of a better way to protect the Deen from distortion than this

8. Other schools were never meticulously codified and refined as were the opinions of the four Imams. Thus it is a red herring to say why only follow these four and not the madhab of say, Thawri or Tabari etc.

9. If Salafism was the way of this Umma throughout its history, why would Sunni scholars continuously condemn it as a dangerous deviation? For example, the great scholar Ibn Rajab (d. 795 AH) wrote a book against them called: Refutation Of Those Who Follow Other Than The Four Schools (Ar-radd `ala man ittaba ghayr al-madhahib al-arba`a).

The Dangers Of Abandoning The Four Schools

We all love to be given a choice. Having a range of hats or shirts to choose from is a luxury. But it would be suicide if we brought this mentality of the marketplace into our religion. When a person says it is not obligatory for the Muslim to follow one of the established schools that is what he is doing. People are then free to shop for whatever opinion takes their fancy! This is termed making your desires into religion and it is forbidden by this verse*:*

Have you seen the one who takes his desires as his god (45:23).

If the millions and billions of Muslims were supposed to apply their minds to the verses and hadith, chaos would only result. Without the scholarly expertise (or a high level of fear of Allah ta`ala) they would make horrendous mistakes. One of the legacies of the four Imams was their accurate use of analogy. That is deducting new rulings where nothing is clearly mentioned. These master scholars expended their intellects on precisely discovering the basic reason behind a ruling (`illa). If that reason is found elsewhere, they concluded, the same ruling would apply. And likewise if it is absent in another context then the ruling does not apply. For instance, many of the intoxicants and drugs that exist today were not mentioned in revelation. Nevertheless, the Islamic jurists explained, because the basic reason behind the forbidding of alcohol was intoxication, logically these other substances must also be considered forbidden by Allah Almighty. But the Salafi/“ahle-Hadith” campaign to get rid of the schools and their rules, would have individuals (and we are witnessing it happening more and more frequently today) turning to the verses and hadith and arguing,-for example- *“I think the reason why ablution (wudhu) was made necessary before prayers was due to the extreme heat people lived in back in those days. In our age we have air conditioners, deodorants etc. Thus since the original reason does not exist anymore, wudhu is no longer necessary”*

Take another example: *“The reason Islam forbade having boyfriends and girlfriends was because of the danger of children being born without*

there being anything to bind the father to take responsibility. Today, effective contraception is easily available and DNA testing ensures no father can deny his child, thus this fear is now fully taken care of. So Muslims should also embrace the culture of men and women freely mixing and dating." If the regulation provided by the four schools is thrown away, how do you stop the many individuals that form part of the Umma, who are weak of iman and taqwa, from turning Islam into a carnival of desires? This horror story is the ultimate end of the simplistic call of Salafism. It is this same call that has tragically even led to individuals perpetrating mass-murder on the streets of many cities in the name of Islam! Rather, it is nothing but a subversion and mockery of Islam.

At the outset, it is important to understand that all four Madhāhib (schools of thought) are on Haqq (the truth). If any individual adheres sincerely to any of the four Madhāhib (Hanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī, and Hambalī), he will be following the right path. The prophet (PBUH) said in a hadith – "Follow the vast majority of my ummah." The majority of the ummah opines that following a madhab is necessary. As well as this, the prophet (PBUH) said "Allah will never allow my ummah to unite upon misguidance, Allah's assistance is with the largest group and whoever deviates from them will be cast into the fire." (Tirmidhi)

After the era of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam and the Sahābah there was a need to codify Islāmic Fiqh (Jurisprudence). There were many chosen servants of Allāh Ta'ālā who were qualified in the field of Ijtihād i.e. to extract laws directly from Qurān and Hadīth. Among them were the four Imāms, namely Imām Abū Hanīfah, Imām Shāfi'ī, Imām Mālik, and Imām Ahmad bin Hambal Rahimahumullāh. It was the will of Allāh that the Madhāhib of these four great individuals were preserved and passed down from generation to generation. Even today, there are followers of all four schools of thought present in the world.

Even though all four schools of thought are genuine, the Ulamā have ruled that it is necessary for a layman to stick to the teachings of one Madhab. The reasons for this are elaborated hereunder:

- It is prohibited to follow one's desires
- Each Madhab is based on certain principles

Man has been created for the worship of Allāh and to submit to the will of Almighty Allāh and obey His commands. The Qurān has explicitly prohibited Insān from following his baseless desires. If a layman were to choose between the rulings of the various Madhāhib without expertise in

Sharīah knowledge, his criterion to determine which ruling to follow would inevitably be his internal desires. Whichever Madhab he would find to be easier and more accommodating, he would hold on tightly to that view. And in another issue if another Madhab would be more lenient, he would jump to that particular Madhab. With such an attitude, the Deen of Allāh would become a mere play and game that would be followed by people who are in search of fulfilling their desires rather than sacrificing their desires for Allāh Ta'ālā.

Based on this attitude of jumping from Madhab to Madhab, at times one reaches a conclusion that contradicts all scholars and all four Madhabs. This would result in a new and separate Madhab created by himself without having adequate knowledge of Deen.

Another reason why it is necessary to follow one particular Madhab is because the system of each Madhab is based on certain broad principles. Various Juristic rulings flow from these broad principles. Hence, the laws and Masāil of one Madhab are inter-connected in that they flow from the same broad principles. If one was to pick and choose which Madhab to follow for different situations, then he would be causing disruption in the system of principles laid out by the Jurists.

It is important to note at this juncture that a person who follows a Madhab is in actual fact following the teachings of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam. He is not following the teachings of the Madhāhib so to say, rather he is following Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam the way it was understood by the Madhab. This is similar to a layman seeking religious advice from a scholar. No one would claim that the man is following the scholar himself, rather he is following the way Dīn was understood and explained by the scholar.

The Beloved Messenger of Allah said, "Allah will never allow my Ummah to unite upon misguidance and incorrect beliefs. Allah's mercy, blessings and protection are with the largest group of Muslims. And he who deviates from the largest group of Muslims will be thrown into Hell." *[Tirmidhi]*

A Muslim must follow one of the four Madhabs, or Islamic schools of Fiqh/jurisprudence. There are no correct Madhabs other than these four. In regards to aqaa'id (or belief), the four Madhabs do not differ in their teachings; rather the differences in teaching are in regards to Fiqh issues e.g. the method of Salah, Wudhu etc.
None of the Madhabs are considered wrong and they are all correct in their own way; the four Imams were undoubtedly the greatest of

Mujtahids i.e. scholars who decide the method of certain actions in accordance with the Shariah.

It is important to note here that, one must choose a Madhab and abide by the rulings of that Madhab only.It is not permissible for a person to mix rulings of different Madhab according to their own preferences. For example, if one chooses to follow the Hanafi Madhab, he/she must follow the teachings of Imam Abu Hanifa in every aspect of Fiqh.

One is only ever allowed to refer to another Madhab if it is extremely difficult or even impossible to perform an action in accordance to one's own Madhab. In this case, one must ensure that the action is performed properly according to the alternative Madhab's rulings.

One who does not follow a Madhab has no form of guidance; they will not be able to differentiate between rulings of Islamic Fiqh, or even understand basic Islamic duties i.e. methods of praying Salah.

The scholars advise that a person should remain with one Madhab all their life, unless they change to another for a truly valid reason i.e. religious necessity.
To change Madhab for worldly purposes is considered a dangerous move, as it implies one is taking his religion lightly and there is even a danger that such a person may die without faith. Additionally, changing Madhab requires thorough research and understanding of the conditions of Fiqh. It will also take one much time and effort to fully adapt to the rulings of the new Madhab. For these reasons, it is strongly recommended to stay attached to one Madhab throughout one's life and to abide by it fully.

Ibn Rajab was an esteemed scholar who followed the hanbali madhab, He was the student of Ibn Qayyim (who was the student of Ibn Taymiyyah). He has written in his book refuting those who don't follow a madhab. One of the main quotes he had stated is: "To protect the sunnah, Allah Most High established a group of individuals to distinguish between the lies,whims and mistakes. They corrected to the utmost limit, and memorized it to perfection."

He had also claimed that the Quran is a means of preserving the words of Allah and the Imams and Scholars are a way of preserving the Hadith and Sunnah. His stance regarding the state of the Ummah if the Sahaba all did Ijtihad together at once is staunch and scrupulous. Ibn rajab has written that " It is inevitable that there would be no order in the religion, and the lawful would have become prohibited and the progibted lawful. Everyone would have said what they wanted, and our religion would

have become like the aqidah of the people of the two ooks before us (Jews and Christians). So it is the wisdom of Allah Most High that set the religion and protected it and appointed Imams for the people: *Imams among the scholars of juridical opinion and hadith, whose knowledge, understanding, and arriving at the furthest goals in the ranks of knowledge of rulings and legal verdicts, are all agreed upon. People who came to them to rely upon them for legal verdicts and to refer to them for knowing judgements Allah raised people who corrected their schools and formulated their principles until each Imams methodology in jurisprudence, basic principles, and details were established; until the rulings were traced back to the basic principles concerning the issues of the lawful and the prohibited were established."*

This is among Allah's gentle kindness toward His believing slaves, and among the mass of His customary laws in preserving this religion. If not for this, people would have seen the wonder of wonders, every imbecile, hot headed, insolent, sham who was impressed with his opinion would claim that he is the greatest of all Imams, that he is the only one guide to the community, that people should turn only to him, and that no one else should be relied upon.

In spite of this, people still appear, claiming to have reached the level of Ijtihad, speak about knowledge without restraint, or following one of the Imams. This is tolerated from some of them because of the apparent veracity of their claims. For others, their statement is rejected and they are declared liars concerning their claim. As for everyone else who had not reached this level: they are only capable of following one of these Imams and following what the rest of the community did.

Allah will surely never guide the community upon misdirection.

Surely, nobody can doubt the fact that up to this day the greatest ever achievement for the Ummah has been its internal intellectual cohesion. From the fifth century up to this day, 90 percent of Muslims have followed a madhab. The only group of "Muslims" that did not was the 'khawarij' or the 'rafidi-shias'.
The slogans we hear today about "following the Qur'an and sunna instead of following the *madhhabs*" are wide of the mark, for everyone agrees that we must follow the Qur'an and the sunna of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). The point is that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is no longer alive to personally teach us, and everything we have from him, whether the hadith or the Qur'an, has been conveyed to us through Islamic scholars. So it is not a question of whether or not to take our din from scholars, but rather, from

which scholars. And this is the reason we have *madhhabs* in Islam: because the excellence and superiority of the scholarship of the *mujtahid* Imams–together with the traditional scholars who followed in each of their schools and evaluated and upgraded their work after them–have met the test of scholarly investigation and won the confidence of thinking and practicing Muslims for all the centuries of Islamic greatness. The reason why *madhhabs* exist, the benefit of them, past, present, and future, is that they furnish thousands of sound, knowledge-based answers to Muslims questions on how to obey Allah. Muslims have realized that to follow a *madhhab* means to follow a super scholar who not only had a comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'an and hadith texts relating to each issue he gave judgements on, but also lived in an age a millennium closer to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and his Companions, when taqwa or "godfearingness" was the norm–both of which conditions are in striking contrast to the scholarship available today.

While the call for a return to the Qur'an and sunna is an attractive slogan, in reality it is a great leap backward, a call to abandon centuries of detailed, case-by-case Islamic scholarship in finding and spelling out the commands of the Qur'an and sunna, a highly sophisticated, interdisciplinary effort by *mujtahids*, hadith specialists, Qur'anic exegetes, lexicographers, and other masters of the Islamic legal sciences. To abandon the fruits of this research, the Islamic ***shari'a***, for the following of contemporary sheikhs who, despite the claims, are not at the level of their predecessors, is a replacement of something tried and proven for something at best tentative.

The rhetoric of following the ***shari'a*** without following a particular *madhhab* is like a person going down to a car dealer to buy a car, but insisting it not be any known make–neither a Volkswagen nor Rolls-Royce nor Chevrolet–but rather "a car, pure and simple". Such a person does not really know what he wants; the cars on the lot do not come like that, but only in kinds. The salesman may be forgiven a slight smile, and can only point out that sophisticated products come from sophisticated means of production, from factories with a division of labor among those who test, produce, and assemble the many parts of the finished product. It is the nature of such collective human efforts to produce something far better than any of us alone could produce from scratch, even if given a forge and tools, and fifty years, or even a thousand. And so it is with the ***shari'a***, which is more complex than any car because it deals with the universe of human actions and a wide

interpretative range of sacred texts. This is why discarding the monumental scholarship of the *madhhabs* in operationalizing the Qur'an and sunna in order to adopt the understanding of a contemporary sheikh is not just a mistaken opinion. It is scrapping a Mercedes for a go-cart.

Some people say that taqleed [following the school of an Imam] is unlawful in Sharia. They insist that a true Muslim should only follow the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, and they say it is equivalent to shirk [polytheism] to follow an Imam in the matters of Sharia. They also claim that the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali schools were formed some two hundred years after the Messenger's (PBUH) death, and therefore, these schools are a reprehensible innovation [bid'ah]. Some also stress that a Muslim should seek guidance directly from the Qur' an and Sunna and no intervention of an Imam is needed to practice upon the Sharia.

This view is based on certain misunderstandings arising from unnecessary treatment of the complicated issues involved. It is true that obedience, in its true sense, belongs to Allah alone. We do not obey anyone other than Him. This is the logical requirement of the doctrine of Tawhid [belief in the oneness of Allah]. The obedience of the Messenger of Allah has been ordered upon us, only because he is the Messenger of Allah who conveyed to us the divine commandments, otherwise he has no divine status deserving our obedience. By obeying and acting according to the teachings of the Messenger (PBUH) , we obtain the pleasure of Allah.

However, the crux of the matter is that the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah is not a simple one. It requires an intensive and extensive study of the sacred sources of Shari a, which cannot be undertaken by a person unqualified in the field. If every Muslim was obligated to consult the Holy Qur'an and Sunna on each and every problem arising before him, it would burden him with a responsibility that would be almost impossible to fulfill. This is because the derivation of the

rules of Shari 'a from the Qur'an and Sunna requires a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language and all the relevant sciences- a combination which every person is not known to have. The only solution to this problem is that a few people should equip themselves with the required knowledge of Shari'a and others should ask them about the rulings in their day-to-day affairs.

This is exactly what Allah has ordained for the Muslims in the following words:"Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they [who are left behind] may get instructions in religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware [of evil] (al-Qur'an 9:122).

This verse of the Holy Qur'an indicates in clear terms that a group of Muslims should devote themselves to acquiring the knowledge of Shari a and all others should consult them for their rulings. Now, if a person asks a reliable scholar [alim] about the juridical [shar'i] ruling in a specific matter and acts upon his advice, can any reasonable person accuse him of committing shirk on the ground that he has followed the advice of a human being instead of the Qur'an and Sunnah? Certainly not.

The reason is obvious, because he has not abandoned obedience to Allah and His Messenger . Rather, he is in search of a way to obey them. However, being unaware of the shar'i commands, he has consulted a scholar in order to know what he is required to do by Allah. He has not taken that scholar as the subject of his obedience, but rather as an interpreter of the divine commands. Nobody can accuse him of committing shirk.

This is taqleed in essence: a person who is not able to understand the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, and so consults a Muslim jurist, often termed an

Imam, and acts according to his interpretation of the sharia. The person never considers the Imam worthy of obedience, but seeks his guidance in order to know the requirements of Shari'a due to not having direct access to the Holy Qur' an and Sunna or not having adequate knowledge for deriving the rules of Shari'a from these sources. This behavior is called taqleed of that jurist or Imam. Thus, how can it be said that taqlid is equivalent to shirk?

The qualified Muslim jurists or Imams, who have devoted their lives to ijtihad, have collected the rules of Shari'a according to their respective interpretations of its sources in an almost codified form. This collection of the rules of Shari'a according to the interpretation of a particular jurist is called the madhhab or "school" of that jurist. Thus, the school of an Imam is not something parallel to the Shari'a or something alien to it. In fact, it is a particular interpretation of the Shari'a and a collection of the major shar'i rules derived from the Holy Qur'an and Sunna by a reliable jurist, and arranged subject-wise for the convenience of the followers of the Shari'a. So, the one who follows a particular school actually follows the Holy Qur'an and Sunna according to the interpretation of a particular reliable jurist, whom he or she believes to be the most trustworthy and most well-versed in the matters of Sharia.

As for the differences in the schools, they have emerged through the different possible interpretations of the rules mentioned in or derived from the Holy Qur'an and Sunna. In order to understand this point properly, it will be relevant to know that the rules mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Sunna are of two different types.

The first type of rules are those which are stated in these sacred sources in such clear words that they allow only one interpretation. No other interpretation is possible thereof, such as the obligation of prayer, zakat,

fasting and pilgrimage; and the prohibition of pork and adultery. With regard to this set of rules, no difference of opinion has ever taken place. All the schools of jurists are unanimous in their interpretation; hence there is no room for ijtihad or taqleed in these matters. Also, since everyone can easily understand them from the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, there is no need for consulting an Imam or jurist.

On the other hand, there are some rules of Shari'a derived from the Holy Qur'an and Sunna where any of the following situations may arise:

(1) The wording used in the sacred sources may allow more than one interpretation. For example, while mentioning the duration of the waiting period ['idda] for a divorced woman, the Holy Qur'an has used the following expression:"And divorced women shall wait [as regards their marriage] for three periods of quru"' (2 :228).

The word quru' used in the above verse has two meanings. It stands both for the "period of menstruation" and the "period of cleanliness" [i.e. tuhr]. Both meanings are possible in the verse and each of them has different legal consequences.

The question that requires jurisprudential efforts here is: "Which of the two meanings is intended here?" While answering the question, the juridical opinions may naturally differ, as is the case. Imam Shaf'i interprets the word quru' as the "period of cleanliness," while Imam Abu Hanifa interprets it as the "period of menstruation." Both of them have a number of reasons in support of their respective views, and neither can be completely rejected. This example highlights one of the causes for differences of opinion among different schools.

(2) Sometimes disparity appears between two hadiths of Allah's

Messenger (PBUH), and a jurist has to reconcile them or prefer one of them over the other. In this case also, the view points of the jurists may differ from one another. For example, there are two sets of traditions found in the books of hadiths narrating different behaviors of the Messenger (PBUH) while bowing [ruku] in prayer. The first set of hadiths mentions that he used to raise his hands before bowing, while the other hadiths mention that he did not raise his hands except at the beginning of prayer. The jurists, while accepting that both ways are correct, have expressed different views regarding the question: "Which of the two ways is more preferable?" Thus, situations like these also cause differences of opinion between various schools.

(3) There are many issues which are not specifically addressed in the Holy Qur'an and Sunna. The solution to these issues is sought either through analogy or through examples, found in the sacred sources, that have an indirect bearing on the subject. Here again, the jurists may have different approaches to extracting the required solution from the Holy Qur'an and Sunna.

Such are the basic causes of differences of opinion between the schools. These differences are in no way a defect in shari'a, rather they are a source of flexibility composing a vast field of academic research governed by the principles of Shari'a and settled by means of the Holy Qur'an and Sunna for all time to come.

A Muslim jurist who has all the necessary qualifications for ijtihad is supposed to attempt his utmost to extract the actual meaning of the Qur'an and Sunna. If he does this to the best of his ability and with sincerity, he will be rewarded for accomplishing his duty, and nobody can accuse him of disregarding the shari'a, even though his view may seem to be weaker when compared to others. This is a natural and

logical circumstance, certain to be found in every legal system. The established laws in every legal framework do not cover every minute detail and possible situation. Also, these laws are often open to more than one interpretation, and different courts of law, while attempting to understand them, often disagree about their meanings. One court may interpret the law in a particular way while another court may understand it in quite a different sense. Thus, nobody can say that the jurists have disrespected the laws of Islam by arriving at different opinions. And since every court of law intends to apply the established law to the best of its ability, its duty towards the Lawmaker (Allah) will be discharged, and its jurists will be rewarded for it.

For example, if one of the courts mentioned earlier were a high court, all the lower courts and the people living under its authority would be bound to follow judgements made by the high court, even though their personal opinion might not conform to the opinion of the high court. In such a case, if the lower courts follow the decision of the high court, nobody can say that they are not following the law or that they take the high court to be a legislator of the law. This is because, in actual fact, the lower courts are following the decision of the high court as a trustworthy interpreter of the law, and not as a legislator.

In exactly the same way, the school of a Muslim jurist provides nothing more than a reliable interpretation of the Sharia. Another qualified jurist may disagree regarding the interpretation of that jurist, but neither can he be accused of disregarding the laws of Shari'ah nor can anyone accuse the followers of a particular school of following something other than the Shari a or of committing shirk. The reason for this is that these Muslims are following the school as a trustworthy interpretation of Sharia.

The next question which may arise here is: "What should a person do with regard to these different schools, and which one of them should he follow?" The answer to this question is very simple. All of these schools have been sincere in their efforts to infer the true meaning of the Shari'a; therefore they are all equally valid. A person should follow the school of any of the recognized Imams whom he believes to be most knowledgeable and most pious.

Although the Muslim jurists who have undertaken the exercise of ijtihad have been many in number, the schools of the four Imams - Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i and Imam Ahmad - are found to be more comprehensive, well-arranged, and well-preserved up to the present day. The Muslim Umma as a whole has taken these four Imams as having the most reliable interpretations of Shari'a.

The four schools are known as the Hanafi, Shaf'i, Maliki, and Hanbali schools. The rest of the schools [madhhabs] are either not comprehensive enough, in the sense that they do not contain all aspects of Shari'a or have not been preserved in a reliable form. For this reason, the majority of the Muslim Umma belongs to one of these four schools. If a person adopts a school of Islamic law as an interpretation of the Shari'a, his obligation to follow the Sharia stands fulfilled.

This is the true picture of the term taqleed with reference to the jurisprudential schools. I hope this explanation will be sufficient to show that taqlid has nothing to do wi th shirk or "ascribing partners to Allah," but is in fact a simple and easy way of following the Shari'a.

Following One Particular Imam In Every Juristic Issue

It is generally believed that each one of the four schools (Hanafi, Shaf'i,

Maliki and Hanbali), all being possible interpretations of the Shari'a, are correct and none of them can be held as something in contradiction with the Shari'a. However, a nonprofessional who lacks the ability to compare between the arguments of each school cannot pick and mix between different views to satisfy his personal desires.The reason for this approach is twofold.

Allah has empathically ordered in a number of verses of the Holy Qur'an to follow the guidance of the shari'a, and has made it suictly prohibited for one to follow one's desires via the rules of the Shari'a. The Muslim jurists, when interpreting the sources of the Shari'a, attempt never to satisfy their personal desires. They attempt to make their best effort to discover the spirit of Shari'a, and they base their opinions on the force of evidence and not merely on the search for convenience. They do not choose an interpretation on the basis of its suitability to their personal fancies; they choose it only on the basis of the strength of the evidence before them.

Now, if someone who has not studied Islamic law is allowed to choose any juristic view without consulting the arguments pertaining to those views, he will be at liberty to select only those views which seem to be more fulfilling to his personal requirements. This attitude will lead him to follow his own desires and not the guidance-a practice totally condemned in the Holy Qur'an.

For example, Imam Abu Hanifa is of the opinion that bleeding from any part of the body breaks the wudu', while Imam Shaf'i believes that bleeding does not break the wudu: On the other hand, Imam Shaf'i says that if a man touches a woman, his wudu'stands broken and he is obligated to make fresh wudu'before offering prayer, while Imam Abu Hanifa insists that merely touching a woman does not break the wudu.

How can the practice of "pick-and-mix" be allowed? A layman may well choose the Hanafi opinion in the matter of touching a woman and the Shaf'i view in the matter of bleeding. Consequently, he will deem his wudu' unbroken even when experiencing both situations together (i.e. he has bled and happened to touch a women) even though his wudu'stands broken now according to both Hanafi and Shaf'i opinions.

Similarly, according to the Shaf'i view, a traveller can combine the two prayers of Zuhr and 'Asr. However, at the same time, if a traveller makes up his mind to stay in a town for four days, he is no longer regarded as a traveller in the Shaf'i view. Hence, he cannot avail himself of the concession of shortening the prayers [qasr] nor of combining two prayers. On the other hand, the period of travel, according to the Hanafi view, is fourteen days, and a person can continue to shorten his prayers as long as he does not resolve to stay in a town for more than fourteen days.

A traveler who has entered a city to stay there for five days, cannot combine two prayers, according to both Imam Shaf'i and Imam Abu Hanifa . This is because, by staying for five days, he cannot use the two concessions of qasr and of combining two prayers according to Imam Shaf'i, and because combining two prayers is not allowed according to Imam Abu Hanifa. Nevertheless, the approach of "pick and mix" still leads some people to adopt the Shaf'i view in the matter of combining prayers and the Hanafi view in the matter of the period of journey.

It is evident from these examples that the selection of different views in different cases is not based on the force of arguments leading to them, but on the facility provided by each. Obviously this practice is tantamount to following one's desires, which is totally prohibited by the

Holy Qur'an. If such an attitude is permitted, it will render the Shari'a a plaything in the hands of the ignorant, and no rule of Shari'a will remain immune to distortion. This is why the practice of "pick-and-mix" has been condemned by all the renowned scholars of Sharia. Imam Ibn Taymiya ,the famous hadith scholar and jurist, says in his Fatawa:

Some people follow at one time an Imam who holds marriage invalid, and at another time they follow an Imam who holds it valid. They do so only to serve their individual purpose and satisfy their desires. Such a practice is impermissible according to the consensus of all the Imams. (Fatawa Ibn Taymiya 2: 285-286).

This was the basic cause for the policy adopted by the later jurists, who made it necessary for the common people to adopt a particular school in its totality. If one prefers the madhhab of Imam Abu Hanifa then one should adopt it in all matters and with all its details. However, if one prefers another madhhab one should adopt that one in full. One should not pick and mix between the different views of the schools for one's own benefit.

The benefit of the validity of the madhhabs, according to the jurists, is that a person can elect to follow anyone of them. But once a person has adopted a particular madhhab, then he should not follow any other madhhab in any matter, whether it be to seek convenience or to satisfy his personal choices, both of which are based on his desires and not on the force of argument. Thus, the policy of "allegiance to a particular school" was a preventive measure adopted by the jurists to preclude anarchy in the matter of the Shari'a.

However, this policy is meant for those who cannot carry out ijtihad themselves or cannot evaluate the arguments advanced by all the

madhhabs in support of their views. For such people, the best approach is to follow one particular school as a credible interpretation of the Shari'a.

Nevertheless, those equipped with the necessary qualifications of ijtihad need not follow a particular school [madhhab]. They can derive the rules of Shari'a directly from the original sources. Similarly, those who are not fully qualified for the exercise of deriving rulings [ijtihadJ, but are so well-versed in the Islamic disciplines that they can evaluate the different juristic views on purely academic grounds (Le. without being motivated by their personal desires), are not forbidden from preferring one school over the other in a particular matter. There are many Hanafi jurists who, despite their allegiance to Imam Abu Hanifa, have adopted the view of some other jurist in some juristic issues. Nevertheless, they are considered Hanafis.

This partial departure from the view of Imam Abu Hanifa could be based on either of the following grounds: sometimes jurists, after an honest and comprehensive study of the relevant material, come to the conclusion that the view of another Imam is stronger. Jurists may also find that the view of Imam Abu Hanifa, although based on analogy, does not conform to an authentic hadith, which is usually due to its not having been conveyed to the Imam; otherwise he most probably would have adopted a view in conformance with that hadith also.

Another case in which jurists have departed from the view of their Imam is when they have felt it a necessity for the collective good of the Umma. These jurists would follow another Imam not in pursuance of their personal desires, but to meet the collective needs of the Umma and in view of the changed circumstances prevailing in their time. These examples are sufficient to show that the followers of a particular school

do not take their school as a substitute for the Sharia or as its sole version to the exclusion of every other madhhab. Followers of a madhhab do not give any madhhab a higher place than it actually deserves within the framework of Shari'a.

I would like to clarify another point which is extremely important in this context. Some people who have no systematic knowledge of Islamic disciplines often become deluded by their superficial knowledge based on self-study (in many cases, it being only through the translation of the Holy Qur' an and hadiths). Following this kind of cursory study, they assume themselves to be masters of Islamic learning and begin criticizing the former Muslim jurists. This attitude is based on ignorance and has no justification.

The extraction of juridical rules from the Holy Qur'an and Sunna is a very meticulous process that cannot be carried out on the basis of sketchy study. While studying a particular juristic subject, one has to collect all the relevant material from the Qur'an and hadiths found in the various chapters and books and undertake a combined study of the scattered material. One must examine the veracity of the relevant hadiths in light of the well-established principles of the science of hadith [usul al-hadith]. One must study the historical background of the relevant verses and traditions. In short, one has to first resolve a number of complicated issues involved. This whole exercise requires very intensive and extensive knowledge which is seldom found in the contemporary scholars who have specialized themselves in the subject, let alone the common people who have no direct access to the original sources. The conclusion of the above discussion is that since all the four schools are based on solid grounds, it is permissible for a competent scholar to adopt another school's juristic view, if he has the required knowledge and ability to understand the merits of each madhhab on the basis of

adequate academic research, without being indulged in pursuing his personal desires. The people who do not fulfil these conditions should not dare to do so, because it could lead to anarchy in the matter of Shari'a.

The method in which this divine knowledge was passed down to us by our predecessors was from heart to heart which required one to be under the direct tutorship and supervision of ‘Ulama. The first teacher of this ummah was our beloved Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) who taught the Sahaba (radhiyallahu ‘anhum), they then taught the Tabi’een (rahimahumullah), who in turn taught the Tab’e Tabi’een (rahimahullah) and who in turn taught our predecessors. As such, the knowledge of Shari’ah was transferred from generation to generation in this manner. Regarding the importance on learning deen from the traditional methods, Shiekh ‘Abdul Fattah Guddah (rahimahullah) mentions: “….Reading books or listening to tape recordings today without a teacher or an instructor does not give sound and complete understanding, and does not instil pure, accurate and authentic knowledge because they are an aide and not a teacher, a tool for remembering and not a means of making one’s (knowledge) sound. This is why they said ‘the one whose sheikh is a book, his mistakes will be more frequent than his accuracy,’ because imitation dominates in taking (knowledge) from books.

It is mentioned in Sheikh Muhammad ‘Awwamah’s (damat barakaatuhu) Ma’alim Irshadiyyah that it was commonly said amongst the Salaf (pious predecessors):

“To seek refuge in Allah from having paper as their shaykh”
It is also mentioned in Ma’alim Irshadiyyah that “in the earlier times knowledge was found in the chests of men. Then it was transferred to books, but the keys still remain in the hands of men. This statement

determines that men are still necessary in the acquisition of it (ilm), as there is no target beyond these two ranks (books and men). The basis for this is in the Sahih (of al-Bukhari): “Indeed Allah will not take away knowledge (from this world) by snatching it away from the people, rather He will do so by taking away the ‘Ulama”. He writes further: “Since it is so, there is no doubt that the keys to knowledge are its bearers (‘Ulama)”.
Once when Imam Abu Hanifah (rahimahullah) was informed of a group of people that sit in a “halaqah” (circle) discussing matters fiqh (jurisprudence) in the Masjid, he enquired: “Do they have a leader (Teacher)?” They replied: “No”. Imam Saheb (rahumahullah) responded: “These people will never acquire (true) fiqh”.[

2. As Muslims, we are commanded to follow the Qur’an and Hadith of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). However, it is impossible to abide by such a command without the guidelines and instructions of our predecessors. As such, in order for one to follow the Qur’an and Hadith, one cannot do so without adhering to the madhaahib of our illustrious Fuqaha, i.e. the madhab of Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam al-Shafi‘i and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (rahimahumullah). Each imam had their own opinion and interpretation. In order for us to make a judgement on a hadith without any knowledge would be abysmal.

Following a madhab is in essence following the Qura’n and Hadith, one cannot practice upon the Qur’an and Hadith without adhering to a madhab.

However,the root of the matter is, that the interpretation of the holy quran and the sunnah is not a simple one. It requires an intensive and extensive study of the sacred sources of Shariah, which cannot be undertaken by a person unqualified in the field. If every Muslim was obliged to directly resort to the Holy Quran and Sunnah on each and every problem arising before him, it would burden him with a responsibility that would be almost impossible to fulfil. This is because the derivation of the rules of the Shariah from the Holy Quran and

Sunnah, requires a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language and all the relevant sciences – a combination which every person is not known to have. The only soloution to this problem is that a few indiviuals from each locality should undertake the responsibility of acquiring an indepth knowledge of the Islamic law, so that other members in that locality could enquire from them, the ruling of an issue occurring in their day-to-day affairs. This is what allah has ordained for the Muslims in the following words:

"And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious"

This verse in the Quraan indicates in clear terms, that a group of Muslims should devote themselves to acquiring the knowledge of Shariah and all others should consult them for their rulings. Now, if a person asks a reliable scholar about the juridical rulings regarding a specific matter and acts upon his advice, can any reasonable person accusing him of commiting Shirk on the ground that he has followed the advice of a human being, provided by the Quran and Sunnah? Certainly not.

The reason is obvious, because he has not abandoned obedience to Allah and his Messenger. Rather, he is in search of a way to obey them. Being unaware of the Shariah commands, he has consulted a scholar, in order to know what he is required to do by Allah. He has not taken that scholar as the subject of his obedience, but rather, as an interpreter of the divine commands. Nobody can accuse him of commiting Shirk.

The concept of authority is not a difficult one to understand. No society would allow someone to perform a surgical operation without first attending medical school; nor would it permit anyone to build a bridge without first graduating from a civil engineering program. Does it not make sense to define criteria for mujtahids to prevent ignoramuses from ruining the Muslims' afterlife?

It is **Haram** for a muqallid to attempt ijtihad and he is sinful for doing so even if he ends up coming to the right conclusion. Allah's laws are not something to be played with and only those qualified to perform ijtihad have permission to delve into the primary evidences and deduce that something is halal or haram. The unqualified must ask the qualified. A mujtahid is to a muqallid what the Qur'an and Sunna are to a mujtahid. To find out the ruling of Allah on a particular issue, we resort to the fiqh books of the four schools; not to Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim (let alone the would-be mujtahids of our age). This is not because we don't want to follow the Qur'an and Sunna; rather, it's because the only way we can truly follow the Qur'an and Sunna is by going through someone who understands what they are saying.

This is where talfiq comes into the picture. Talfiq is to join between the positions of more than one school so that the resulting amalgam would be unacceptable according to all mujtahids. For example, someone who bleeds and decides to follow the Shafi'i school on wudu cannot follow the Hanafi school in prayer by not reciting the fatiha behind the imam, since both schools would say that his prayer was invalid. A muqallid who does talfiq in this manner has not absolved himself of his responsibility before Allah because there is no mujtahid who would look at his action and say that he had done what Allah asked of him.

With this in mind, Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami's (whose word, along with Imam Muhammad al-Ramli's, constitutes the final word in terms of fatwa in the Shafi'i school) definition of talfiq makes perfect sense. He said: "Whoever makes taqleed of an Imam in an issue must follow the requirements of his madhab on that issue and everything else that is related to it." (I'atu'l-talibin, 4.219). Since wudu and salat are related (wudu is a condition for the prayer), one must follow the same school on both. Since zakat, fasting, pilgrimage and prayer are not related to each other, one can validly follow a different school in each one.

Mixing between Schools without Talfiq

Since a muqallid's responsibility is only to fulfill the requirements set out by any of the madhabs, one could conceivably follow the positions of mutliple schools in a manner that avoids talfiq, praying fajr as a Hanafi, zuhr as a Shafi'i, asr as a Hanbali, and maghrib as a Maliki, and one would have absolved oneself of one's responsibility to perform these four prayers. The option to follow an opinion from another school can be useful when following the position of one's own madhab would lead to undue hardship, which is why the scholars mention that differences of opinion are a mercy.

The 'ulama also mention, however, (among them Ibn Hajar in the same reference given above), that someone who follows positions in a different school without need and only to seek the easy way out is sinful and thereby becomes a fasiq (corrupt). This is not something to be taken lightly, and is particularly relevant these days because of the ease with which one can find out the opinion of another madhab on a certain issue. Many of us might be subscribed to the Hanafi list, the Shafi'i list and the Hanbali list and seeing easy rulings in another madhab might seem tempting at times. To seek out easy rulings from a madhab other than the one one usually follows without any pressing need would be sinful.

In order for a person to understand a hadith they may need to look at the madhabs' perspective on that issue. For example: The prophet (PBUH) told a person that kissing is haram. In another instance, he told another sahabi that kissing your wife whilst fasting without exchanging saliva is fine. The reason the prophet had told that sahabi that kissing was prohibited is because he was young and he was conscious of the fact that the kissing may get intimate. In the other instance, the sahabi was much older so it was permitted. Without the 4 imams, we wouldn't be able to understand hadith to this extent.

At the time of Imam Abu Hanifa, there were many scholars that lived within Kufa,Medina,Makkah etc. However very naturally he stood out from the rest for his knowledge and intellectual ability within thelogical rhetoric. It was the same case for Imam Malik, Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal. It was not a mere coincidence rather they were chosen by Allah.

Abdullah bin Umar understood that the prophet (PBUH) said a deceased person would be punished because the household are crying. On the other hand, Hadhrat Aisha understood that her household are crying because the deceased person is being punished. As we can see, there are many different perspectives on hadith and if we were to interpret them ourselves we would possibly committing sin.
Majority of the muslim ummah read the quran in the hafs canonical mode. There are in reality 7 different ways of reading the quran. So by containing yourself to one madhab it is the same way of containing yourself to one mode of reading the quran. It is the most efficient, intellectual and proper methodology of undertaking.

Imam Dhahabi says *Ignorance will be one of the biggest fitnas to hit the ummah*. Many Salafis are ignorant towards accepting some views given by the imams. Many salafis say why can't we just follow Quran and Sunnah. The four imams ensured the Quran and Sunnah were extrapolated, interpreted processed and inferred correctly.
The prophet said that when a judge is faced with an issue he should try his best to use the Quran and Sunnah to infer and extrapolate a ruling using his own intellect and qualification to make a judgement. When this happens and he is right, he gains two rewards for it and when he is wrong he gains one reward for it. This shows that ijtihad for the Imams

were mandatory so that we can understand and reflect upon the Quran and sunnah.

Imam Shaybani (imam abu hanifa's student) disagreed with about 15 percent of his maslahs but still propagated and proliferated the Hanafi school of thought.
Some people may argue that some scholars such as Ibn taymiyyah, Ibn hajar, Imam Ghazzali disputed against some minor issues within their preffered madhab. For example, imam ghazzali was a Shafi but preferred to lift his hands up to his ears in Salah. The reason they were permitted to do so was because they were great mujtahideen. For a layperson to do the same thing is not permitted as they have not reached that level of ijtihad. Ijtihad will be discussed later in this book. Salafis have dismantled this traditional system. They deploy this method of telling people to not follow madhabs and to follow quran and sunnah. A typical being would have no knowledge regarding this issue and would fall into this evil trap. Salafis claim that following a madhab is unnecessary but to become a salafi you have to follow the rulings given by their scholars – bin Baaz, Uthaymeen and Albani. The very same thing that they are warning you to stay away from; they are deploying this tactic to maintain their own agenda. It seems as if Salafism is a madhab in itself. In order to develop another madhab nowadays would be almost impossible. Imam Abu hanifa saw Anas ibn Malik (a Sahabi).- this makes him a Tab'ii. He also had hadith manifested and finalised within his time. Imam Malik was in the centre of Medina at the prime of Islam. They had the ability to see people practise hadith almost at the same time of the sahaba. Yet the salafis think it is more logical to follow a mujtahid from the 20th /21st century.

Moreover, Salafis use the hadith regarding 72 sects against following a madhab. That hadith was regarding Aqeedah and not Fiqh. The

Hanafis,Shafis,Malikis and Hanbalis all respect each other despite their difference in views. They only dispute over vague issues and not obvious rulings. Every single imam was connected and had some connotations towards one another – this will be discussed in the 4 imams section of this book.

Throughout history, Makkah and Medina have always had 4 musalahs for the 4 different imams. Due to the Saudi government supporting the views of Wahabism/Salafism many Islamic traditional customs changed. The Saudi government spent millions of pounds to financially support publications to convert conventional Muslims towards an extremist viewpoint of Islam. ISIS is one of the results of Salafi-Jihadism and the claims given by them will also be refuted within this treatise.

Many salafis try and use hadith to be in their favour and to help sustain their claims – however the fault lies in referring to the English or Urdu translation of the hadiths, because in order to get a clear picture of the meaning, one has to possess the intellectual capacity to comprehend the hadiths together with a proper understanding of the background and the prelude of the hadiths. In the absence of the prerequisites, the mere translation is bound to lead to objections and misgivings. There are unlearned salafis like Dr Akram Nadwi who claim that due to madhabs not being stated in the quran there is no need to follow one. This is a very ignorant view and I hope this treatise has rebuked those claims comprehensively. These are the main points as to why following a madhab is **wajib** upon a muslim.

“And do not follow your personal desires, for they will lead you astray from the path of Allah” (38:26) Quraan

Allah says: “And We have revealed to you the Reminder (Quran) so you may explain to mankind of what has been revealed so that they may contemplate (16:44)

Allah says in the Quraan: “Do not pursue what you have no knowledge about”. (17:36)
For a layperson to pursue hadith into conventional matters would be absurd.

Shaykh Muhammad Hussain Sahib has written in his compilation Ishaatus-Sunnah, after opposing madhabs for a very long time he become affected with the bitter experience of not following a madhab. “We discovered after 25 years of experience that those people who abstained from doing taqlid eventually bid Islam farewell. Some leave Islam whereas others end up without a madhab. Rebellion and disobedience of the Shariah is a grave result of this freedom.

Even though all 4 madhabs are principally correct, in extracting their verdicts from the Holy Quran and Sunnah, the juristic scholars have declared it impermissible for a layman to follow all the 4 madhabs at once. Shaykh Yusuf Ludhyanwi explains this point in detail in his book “Differences in the Ummah and the Straight Path”. In summary, it is necessary for a layman who does not possess the qualifications of a mujtahid to restrict himself from one Madhab only. If a person switches from one madhab to another by claiming he is following all of them at once whilst following the quran and sunnah then he will be following his own understanding and desires.

A layman is in no position to jump to conclusions and to claim what is correct and what is not, if he does not possess the basic qualifications of ijtihad. If in the worldly affairs, no layman can draw any conclusions on a

particular subject without any qualifications then how can such a person be able to do so in a religious matter?
Self conceit and following ones desires are destructive of one's Imaan.

Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thanwi states that a person who follows one Madhab, will have a deen that is systematic and all his religious obligations will be easier to discharge; whereas a person picking and choosing from one Madhab to another, will have a deen that is not systematic. If a person was to select all of the strictest rules from all of the Madhahib, then he will be putting himself into unnecessary difficulty which is wrong. On the other hand, if someone selects all of the easy rulings from the Madhahib, then this becomes personal interest which is also destructive. Hence, to adhere to one imam will be systematic and free from all self-interest. All of the Madhabs in their juristic verdicts and opinions are neither too strict, nor too lenient, but very moderate.
(Ashraful Jaawab pg 161)

Shah Walliulallah Dehlawi states: "If there was no system of restriction to one school of thought, then every person would pick and choose religious rulings that conformed to their own whims and desires and the Deen would be a toy (in the hands of the masses). Thus the only solution to suppress self-interest is to adhere to one Madhab. (Ashraful Jawab pg 69)

A madhab is, after all, nothing more than a piece of precision equipment enabling us to see Islam with the maximum clarity possible. If we use our own devices, our amateurish efforts will inevitably distort our vision.

In summary, there are many reasons as to why following a madhab is necessary and this topic will be elaborated upon further during this

refutation of the Salafis and those who oppose following a school of thought.

Taqlid

Taqlid basically means to practise upon Deen in accordance with the teachings of one of the four illustrious imams. The scholars are the inheritors of the prophet. Guiding people was the main objective of our beloved prophet and it is the quran which is the preservation of his guidance. In Surah Fatiha Allah talks about the straight path. “The path of those upon whom you have showered your favour”. The word whom is relating to those people whom Allah has guided. The Quran is a means of guidance however the Sunnah needs to compliment it in order for the Quran to benefit us. It is a famous saying of the scholars that the Quran needs the Sunnah but the Sunnah does not need the Quran.

When the prophet (PBUH) informed the Sahaba regarding that his Ummah will be divided into seventy three groups amongst whom only one will be on truth, and the sahabah inquired as to who that group would be, he replied: (Those who follow my path and the path of my companions).

The 4 imams are the baseline for fiqh (jurisprudence). Our illustrious predecessors have stated that the true knowledge of the Deen would only pass from chest to chest and not by book to chest. Thus, only the knowledge has worth in the sight of Allah which was conveyed and transmitted by the companions and so on and so forth. Since the concept of transmitting knowledge was flawed for previous nations due to there not being any credible authorities, their creed and beliefs were eventually effaced from the very core, to the extent that there exists almost no trace of the original. The only reason our knowledge is present is due to the pious predecessors- this includes the 4 imams. The very people claiming to follow the Salaf are in reality opposing them.

Abdullah Ibnul Mubarak stated: “Acquiring qualification from a credible authority (of Quran,Hadith and Fiqh) is an integral part of the Deen. Had this not been so, anyone would have been able to make claims (in religious matters) according to their own whims and fancies.”

One such proof is a hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim form Muawiyah that Rasullallah said: “There will always be from my ummah a group that will adhere to the truth. Neither will those who abandon them be able to harm them and nor those who oppose them, until the command of Allah arrives. Ie. The consensus of scholars (Ijmaa). Since the time of the sahabas, to this present day, no credible scholar has disputed that ijma is an indisputable proof of shariah.

For many centuries, the scholars of Islam were unanimous about the legitimacy of the four Madhahib, and about making taqlid thereof. The rulings that were concurred upon by the four madhahib were practised by the entire ummah without exception. In other words, for many centuries, there were ijma regarding the 4 madhahib and their rulings.

During the last century, a group emerged that began diverting people away from the four madhahib and their taqlid. The custodians of the sedition, through devious and alluring arguements, began encouraging people to refer directly to the Quran and books of hadith, without the need for the authorties and prior scholars. They even went to the extent of regarding those who refer to the deductions of the scholars and authorities, as abandoning the Quran and the Sunnah of Rasullallah. In a subtle way, they create an impression that the teaching of the illustrious Imams was different to the teachings of the Quran and the Blessed Sunnah of our prophet.

In recent times, this heresy has taken the form of an epidemic. These deviant people ensnare ignorant youth, who are turning towards Deen, and desire to become closer to the blessed sunnah. Their slogans are appealing, explanations appeasing, and sometimes, the first impression unfortunately turns out to be the last one.

The only solution for ignorance is its converse. By educating the masses, it is hoped that people will be able to recognise the truth from falsehood.

Taqlid technically means accepting the views of a Mujtahid in issues of Islamic Law, without seeking to know the proof thereof, on the belief that his views are backed by legitimate Sharia evidence. A muqallid is one who ascribes to the Taqlid of a Mujtahid because he lacks the qualifications to perform Ijtihad.

Ijtihad is the process of extracting laws from the four basic sources of Sharia via the Quran,Sunnah,Ijma (consensus of opinion) and Qiyas (analogy based on explicit rulings of the quran and Sunnah). A mujtahid or faqih is a scholar who qualifies to employ the tool of ijtihad and is able to reach verdicts.

The fundamentals and technical terminology of every branch of knowledge are acquired on the basis of Taqlid, i.e. without questioning the authority of the masters. For example, a person who studies medicine accepts everything that he is taught until he reaches a stage where he is qualified to voice his opinion, or to agree or disagree with those who were more qualified than him. The layman, or the one who does not achieve this degree of proficiency has no right whatsoever to make a statement in the field of medicine, even though he may possess a doctorate in the field of law. Thus, even experts in the field of law, or engineering, etc are mere Muqallids (followers) in the field of medicine.

Imam Shafi has stated: “It is not permissible for anyone to pass a ruling (by means of his own reasoning) in Allah’s Deen, except a person who is well versed in the book of Allah. This entails being aware of its Nasikh (abrogating) and Mansukh (abrogated) verses, its Mukham (clear/strengthened) and Mutashabihah (obscure) verses, its Tawil (figurative verses) and Tanzil (the condition or time of revelation, or the order of revelation of various verses) Makki and Madani verses, the detailed purpose of the verses, and the background circumstances regarding their revelation. Similarly, he should be well versed in the Hadith of Rasulullah, its Nasikh and Mansukh;and he should be equally knowledgable about the hadith of Rasulullah as he is with the Quran. Thereafter he should be well versed in the various sciences of the Arabic language, Arabic poetry and all the various sciences that are required for the study of Islamic Knowledge and the Quran. At the same time he should be equipped with impartiality and justice coupled with constrained speech. He should be acquainted with the differences of the Fuqaha. Last but not least, he should be talented in the art of extracting rules from the sources of the Shariah”.

It is clear from this quote that Ijtihad is not permissible for an ordinary person rather specifically for the selected indiviuals who are able to reach that level of understanding. After having fulfilled the above

requirements, then only may he voice his opinions and pass rulings in matters of permissibility or prohibiton. If not, then he has no right to voice his opinions in religious knowledge, and he is not permitted to pass any ruling.

Hafiz ibn Abdil Bar recorded this quote of Imam Shafi and after substantiating it with the attestations of other illustrious scholars, added the following conditions:

1. The seerah of the prophet (PBUH).
2. Lives of the companions of the prophet.

Note: The reason these two points are also crucial are due to the impact the sahaba's lives had on the Shariah. It is said that Imam Malik was an expert on the lives of the companions.

1. Arabic Grammar (Nahw and Sarf) Syntax, Etymology, Derivatives and Morphology.

2. The science of Arabic Rhetoric (‘Ilm a-balagha)

3. The sciences of Exegesis (Tafsir)

4. The science of Ḥadīth (‘Ulum al-Ḥadīth) #

5. The knowledge of jurisprudential principles (Usul al-Fiqh)

6. The science of Qiraah.

7. Usool-u-deen

8. Abrogating and abrogated verses

9. Fiqh

10. Language

11. The incidence and occurrences in the background of the relevation of various verses.

12. Those ahadith that explain brief and unclear verse

13) Gift of knowledge –

14) Taqwa

15) Ibadah

16) Zuhd (abstention from indulgence in luxuries)

17) Purity of the soul

18) Wara (abstention from all futilities)

Only after having studied these basic subjects, nurturing and developing them to the advanced degree of a specialist, could and would one immerse oneself in the massive corpus of Qur'anic and Hadithic texts. This obvious fact should suffice in making a person realise any movement that calls its unlearned followers to go directly to the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, has nothing to do with Islam and is in fact a means of misguidance. Ninety-five percent of those who fervently hold to the idea of going directly to the Qur'an and Sunna, do not even know, let alone have mastered, the Arabic language. It would be rash and dangerous for such a person to assume that he could decide on a practical issue of the Din by using translations of Sahih al-Bukhari and the Holy Qur'an, even if he may be genuinely intelligent otherwise. The most obvious reason for this is that more than a dozen major ḥadīth collections have not been translated into English.1 How can a person come anywhere close to a reasonable judgement on a ruling of the Dīn, when he does not have the whole picture in front of him? Add to this, translations, of whatever little does exist- can never reveal the sheer complexity of meaning and linguistic dimensions contained in the Arabic words. Without an appreciation of the depth of each and every word, syntactical implications etc., a person will easily miss a ruling latent therein, hence giving a skewed interpretation. Take the example of the following verse: "O believers, when you stand up to pray wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and your feet up to the ankles…" (Sura 5:6)

This verse contains many legal implications and rulings. Just one of them is as a consequence of the Arabic conjunction wāw (and). To the unsuspecting non-Arab, this is just to be translated as "and." However, this wāw is much deeper than the "and" in English. Expert jurists like Imām Shāfiʿī and Imām Abū Ḥanīfah differed on its function in a

sentence. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, supporting his view with many evidences, holds that it has the function of unrestricted joining (Muṭlaq al-Jam‘). Thus if a person said: “Zayd and (wāw) Bakr came to me” the meaning could be:1. Zayd came first then Bakr, 2. Bakr came first then Zayd, 3. or both came together simultaneously. This is the implication of wāw according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. Other jurists, however, held that the function of wāw is to give sequence or order (tartīb). In other words, that which precedes the wāw is sequentially first, in the order. Thus, in the abovementioned example it can only be said that Zayd came first. This subtle difference in relation to a mere letter meant that according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, if a person washed the limbs of wuḍū in other than the order mentioned in the verse, his wuḍū is valid and there is no sin upon him. Imam Shāfi‘ī however, based on his understanding of this conjunction, declares it obligatory to adhere to the sequence mentioned in the verse: the face must be washed first, followed by the arms, then the head will be wiped and finally the feet will be washed. If this order is broken, the wuḍū is invalid and must be repeated. This is just one example among thousands which illustrate that interpreting the sacred sources is not for the layman.

Another point we would question those who believe themselves worthy of discussing such intricate issues is why should this verse according to them establish an obligation (Fard)? Why not take the washing of limbs and the sequence mentioned therein for as a Sunnah (based on the practice of the Prophet) or Wajib (a lesser kind of obligation) or Mustahab (Praiseworthy)? These and other similar questions cannot be answered without appreciation of the Arabic language. This also reveals the folly of those who counter by saying that we agree that the issues of the Dīn are as complex as you mention, but nevertheless, the layman will ask a scholar to merely present the various different meanings and arguments to the layman and then he will use his ability to choose the stronger position. In reply, is it realistic to expect a layman in the Islamic sciences, who is busy bringing up his family, spending most of his waking hours earning a living for them and fulfilling his own and their religious and worldly needs, to be able grasp the subtleties and linguistic complexities of these issues; and then in relation to every issue of the hundreds he needs to act upon? In other words, for example, before he marries, rather than restricting his questioning of a scholar to what are

the conditions needed to effect a valid Nikah and what are the rights of the wife, he must be able to not only fathom the validity of the detailed evidences for the opinion presented by the scholar, but also compare his evidences with the evidences of opposing views. After this, finally, he will make his judgement of which of the two (or more) is the valid or soundest opinion and why. If he were to do this, in even half of the issues of the Din, he would be taking on, without exaggeration, a mammoth task. Assuming he had all the Arabic sources in front of him and was a genius of the Arabic language, he would still have a formidable list of undertakings in front of him. He would have to seek out every text, verse and ḥadīth, to locate all the relevant evidences for every single aspect or ruling. Once he has gathered all the texts, he would need to sift out the weak or inadmissible evidences among them, based upon solid criteria. Of course it would not be allowed for him to just say I follow this hadith because such and such scholar has declared it sound and said it can be acted upon, because, as all fair readers will admit, this in itself is the taqlīd these people are so against.

As for the role of interpreting the Sacred Texts (nuṣūṣ), that is the sole preserve of the scholars, as Allah has indicated when he instructed the believers to share out their work: “With all this, it is not desirable that all of the believers take the field [in time of war]. From within every group in their midst, some shall refrain from going forth to war, and shall devote themselves [instead] to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Faith, and [thus be able to] teach their homecoming brethren, so that these [too] might guard themselves against evil.” (Sura Al-Tawbah:122). Furthermore, it is impractical for a layperson to go to a scholar and expect him to laboriously and patiently elaborate to him on every issue where scholars have differed, and then, having spent perhaps over an hour explaining the primal evidences alongside the often complicated supportive evidences of the main differing scholars, announce to the layman,

“Now you choose whichever you feel is the strongest opinion!”

Those who live in the Muslim community know very well that in the vast majority of cases when the layman asks a question to a scholar, the scholar will not even present the detailed evidence for his own opinion that he tells the questioner, let alone delve into the evidences of others.

This is because he is fully aware that the layman is neither capable of weighing up between legal opinions nor is he obliged to do this.

Once it is acknowledged that the layman must follow scholars why is it that the four Imāms and their schools alone are given preference over all other scholars? Firstly, all four Imāms: Imāms Abū Hanīfah, Shafi, Mālik, Aḥmad, belong to that age and generation, or very close to it in the case of Imam Ahmad, about which the Messenger of Allāh a testified as its being the best of this Ummah. He a said, “The best of my ummah is my generation, then the generation after them, then the generation after them.” Furthermore, the testimonies of the most erudite Sunnī scholars for over a thousand years leave no doubt that these four men and their schools represent the most authentic, penetrating and faithful understanding of the Holy Qur’an and Sunna. No scholar of the later centuries has received the kind of unequivocal acclaim they did from the high calibre of scholars that they did.

A man asked Imam Ahmad: “If a person memorises 100,000 hadith, can he qualify as a Faqih (jurist).” He replied. “No.” The person asked “What about 200,000 hadith?” Imam Ahmad once again replied “No.” The person asked “What about 300,000 hadith?” Imam Ahmad once again replied “No.” The man said: “And 400,000?” This time he shook his palm, indicating that: “probably now he may be a Faqih, fit enough to pass a fatwa on his record on his own accord”

Ibn taymiyyah comments by saying that “When a mufti passes a ruling in accordance to the opinion of his Imam, then indeed he has based it on (sound) knowledge. In reality, he is only conveying the ruling passed by his Imam, therefore he has not digressed from knowledge.”

Ibrahim Nakhai, Sufyan Thowri, Al owzai, Abu Thowr, Ishaq bin Rahawaih, Waki ibn Jarrah, Laith ibn Saad etc. Were amongst the many famous mujtahidoon of the past. They had their own madhabs but due to the dominance of the 4 main madhabs they hall faded into oblivion and have been rendered obsolete.

As for the rest of the Mujtahideen apart from the 4 imams, their madhahib were not codified, researched and recordered to the extent that these aforementioned madhahib were.

I would like to pose a question. We believe and accept the fact that the quran and sunnah are revelation and inspiration from the almighty allah. Therefore, why did Allh, who is All-Knowledgeable and All-aware, not reveal/inspire His Rasul to express the ahadith using phrases that leave no ambiguity or scope for people to differ? For example, Allah says thalathata quru. Why is it not specified as to what the clear-cut meaning is? This is the beauty of the religion.

In fact, why did he not inspire Rasulullah to clearly state to the Sahaba the day he instructed them to hurry to Banu Quraizah that they should not perform asr on the way? Instead he said: “Every one of you should perform Asr at Banu Quraizah only. Consequently, there were some of the sahaba who adhere to the literal meaning and others who reffered to the purport. The sahabas differed in the time of praying yet the prophet never reprimanded them.

The most astonishing fact i have come across is that Imam Malik was given the opportunity to unite the ummah upon his madhab by placing his muwatta on the kaaba, but he refused. He himself relates that “The Caliph – Abu Jafar Al Mansur said to me: I intend to create uniformity in this knowledge. I thus desire to write to the various commanders of the armies, and to the judges to practise upon it only. Whoever opposes it will be beheaded.”

I said to him: O leader of the believers! Verily Rasulullah used to be amongst his followers, when he would dispatch detachments, and at the times he would go out himself as well. During his era, not many lands were conquered. Then Abu Bakr succeeded him, and the condition was very similar during his period. Thereafter Umar took his reigns and Allah subjugated many lands on his hands. He found no alternative but to delegate the companions of the prophet as teachers (to various lands). People continued to learn from them, and pass their knowledge over to their descendants up to this day. If you attempt to shift them from this knowledge that they may possess to what they don’t know, they will consider it as kufr. Rather, re-inforce every region with its own knowledge, and take this knowledge for yourself”. Mansur remarked: “That’s impropable! Record it for Muhammad (my son)”

Some salafis claim that we must take the strongest view (Tarjih). Then a) whose task is it to determine the strongest view? b) how do we go about determining the strongest view? c) will the person entrusted with the task be qualified and capable for determing that? D) if it is entrusted upon one or more persons, and people are expected to follow them, then is this not taqleed? E) if it is left to every individual, then wouldn't that result in more conflict and hundreds of schools, instead of 4. F) What criteria do we follow in establishing whether a hadith is acceptable or not? g) Whose interpretation of the hadith do we follow? F) What criteria do we follow in establishing whether a hadith is acceptable or not? g) whose interpretation of the hadith do we follow? We thus conclude that we are content with following any of the four, particularly after the ummah at large has borne testimony to their knowledge and taqwa.

All four madhabs are simultaneously acceptable as far as the Shariah is concerned. To illustrate this, an example is given of 5 people who are travelling on a cloudy day. One of the companions happens to be blind. At the approach of the time of a certain salah, they find themselves in a jungle. Four of them begin to discuss the direction of the qiblah, and each one arrives at a totally different conclusion and performs his salah accordingly. The blind man however, is unable to take part in this discussion, but since he considers one of the four more knowledgeable and experienced in this regard, he follows him. Whilst only one is right, the Salah of each of the five is in perfect order. It will not be necessary for the rest of them to repeat it later when the clouds have cleared and they were able to distinguish whose direction was the correct one. The example of the four people is like that of the 4 imams. The 5th person who is blind is like the follower (Muqallid) who does not possess the qualifications to perform ijtihad, and therefore follows one of the four imams.

This explanation is deduced from the following Ahadith:

Hadith no 1.

"When a judge passes a judgement on the basis of Ijtihad and he arrives at the correct answer, he receives a double rewards, (one for performing ijtihad and the other for extracting a correct ruling

of Shariah). If on the other hand he erred, then he receives one reward only (for his ijtihad, and he will be excused for his error.)

Hadith no 2.

"Any person who forms an opinion regarding any verse of the Quran, of his own accord (i.e. without being qualified to do so) has indeed erred even though his opinion may actually conform to the truth."

Imam Ghazali remarks that: "The 'Ulama' of Fiqh possessed 5 qualities: Ibadah,Taqwa,Knowledge of the Akhirah, Understanding of the welfare of the creatiobn and striving to seek the pleasure of allah through fiqh.

Taqlid was also practised within the time of the Sahaba. As an Arabic word, *taqlid* stems from *qallada,* which means: 'To put a collar (*qiladah*) around the neck.' It is called this because the one who does *taqlid* – the *muqallid* – entrusts his affair to the one he is performing *taqlid* of. He is like someone being led by the collar, so to speak.

1) Ikrimah narrates that he people of Madinah, during Hajj once asked Ibn Abbas about the ruling of a particular masalah. After receiving an answer from him, they said: "We will not practise upon your ruling and leave the ruling given by Zaid (Ibn Thabit)
2) Once Umar saw Talhah adorned in a coloured ihram and said: "You- O group – are the imams, whom people follow. If some ignorant person sees you wearing this, he will say that he wore a coloured cloth in Ihram."
3) It is reported that certain very learned Sahabah would abandon their own views for the views of those whom they considered more able and worthy. Consequently, Ibn Masud would leave his view for that of Umar. Abu Musa would leave his view for that of Ali; and Zaid Ibn Thabit would leave his view for that of Ubayy Ibn Kaab – despite the fact that each of these Sahabah possessed vast knowledge.

4) Imam Tawus says: “I met seventy from amongst the companions of rasulullah who would resort to opinion of Ibn Abbas whenever they differed on a matter.”

Ibnul Qayyim states: “As far as my knowledge goes, the nymber of those who issues Fatwa from amongst the companions of Rasulullah was over one hundred and thirty. This total compromises of both men and women.”

Hadhrat ibn Abbas states that Hadhrat Umar delivered a sermon at a place called Jabia and said: O people! If you wish to know more about the Quran you should ask Ubayy ibn Kab, those who wish to ask about inheritance should go to Zaid ibn thabit, those who wish to ask about fiqh should go to Muadh ibn Jabal and those of you who wish to ask about property of goods should come to me for allah has made me a custodian and distributor.

Nowadays, the doors of Ijtihad have been rendered closed as it was feared that Ijtihad would be attributed to someone non worthy of it or someone whose opinion and deen was unreliable, then the people (among the scholars) closed the doors to further differences. The Ulama therefore clearly stated that the ability to reach the rank of a Mujtahid has become virtually impossible. They thereby directed the people to making Taqlid of one of these four imams and also warned people against switching taqlid (between different madhahib). Anyone who thus claims Ijtihad in this age will be rejected and will not be followed. The entire Muslim world nwo have consensus about the taqlid of the 4 Imams.

Allamah Shihab ar-Ramli (d. 957 AH) states: “The person who has a picture of the degree of the unrestricted Ijtihad would feel ashamed before Allah from attributing it to anyone of this day and age. In fact, Ibnus-Salah (d. 643 AH) and his followers stated that it had become extinct three hundred years ago, hence, it had become extinct about six hundred years ago.”

Allamah Munawi (d. 1031 AH) says: “The Alim of the Syrian region, (Imam) Ibn Abid- Dam (d.642 A.H) writes, after mentioning all the conditions of Ijtihad: “It is hardly possible to find these conditions in any

scholar today of our age. Instead, there is no Mujtahid mutlaq on the surface of the earth today."

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi writes in this regard: "The rejecters of Taqlid object by saying: "Did the Hanafis (or Muqallids) receive Wahy (revelation) that Ijtihad has come to an end? However, (they do not understand that) it is a divine principle that the existence of every necessity occurs at times of its need. Rainy seasons generally occur at times of its need. Rainy seasons generally occur during the months of need for rain that vary according to region. Winds also blow at the time of need. Where temperatures become intensely low, animals have thicker wool; and there are countless such examples. Likewise, when there was a need for recording of Hadith, Allah created people with phenomenal memories. Such memories are nowhere to be found today. Even these very rejecters of the four Madhahib, who sing slogans of following Hadith, are not able to bring forth one individual who has memorised even Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Al-Muslim with their chains of narrations as was done by the illustrious authors of the blessed books.

"In the same way, when the need arose to document the Shariah, Allah granted many people granted many people grand talents and capabilities in Fiqh and Ijtihad. Now that Deen has been recorded, and its laws and fundamentals outlined, this needs no longer exists. Yes, to the extent of the need, some ability of Ijtihad is still to be found, whereby contemporary laws are formulated, through the medium of the principles laid down by the Mujtahidin".

Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibnul Hakam was asked. Who is a Faqih? He replied. "The person who extracts one principle from Quran and Sunnah in which he was not preceded by anyone, then divides that principle into one hundred branches." The person asked. Who is that has such power? In reply he said: "Muhammad Ibn Idris Ash-Shafi (IMAM SHAFI)".

Note: The difference between a Faqih and a Muhaddith is that a muhaddith preserves the hadith of rasulullah (PBUH) but a Faqih extracts the Deen of Allah from the Hadith

It is narrated by Imam Ali Ibn Al-Ja'd that once a man came to Imam Zuhair Ibn Muawiyah and Imam Zuhair asked the man: "Where do you come from? (ie. Where did you study previously). The man replied: "...from Abu Hanifah". Imam Zuhair remarked: "You're going to Abu Hanifah for one day is more beneficial for you than staying with me for one month."

It is also narrated about 'Abdullah Ibn Wahb' one of the most eminent student of Imam Malik and an outstanding scholar of hadith. He said "I met (studied under) three hundred and sixty Ulama. Had it not been for Imam Malik and Imam Laith Ibn Saad I would have gone astray in knowledge."

It is important to understand that those who perform Ijtihad within the madhab (of a Mujtahid) such as Abu Yusuf and Muhammad – the two students of Imam Abu Hanifa ; they had the ability to extract laws from the basic sources of Shariah in accordance with the principles laid down by their teacher (Imam Abu Hanifa). They differed with him on subsidiary laws but made Taqlid of him in the fundamental principles.

Some salafis like to argue that what benefit is there in following a dead man? The statement of the illustrious Sahabi Abdullah Ibn Masud adequately answers this question raised by an ignoramus in the guise of a scholar of Hadith. The narration is as follows: "None of you should blindly follow anyone in matters of his Deen, (in a manner that) if he believes, he follows suit. However, if you have no alternative but to follow someone, then follow suit. However, if you have no alternative but to follow someone, then follow those who have passed away, because a living person is not safe from trials." This means that before death, there is no guarantee that any person or scholar will remain on the straight path until his demise. However, it will be safe to follow the teachings of one who has left the world already and it is established that he has never deviated up until his last breath. The world of scholars, through the passage of centuries, testified to the elevated rank of each of the four imams without exception. These ignorant "scholars" wish to take the place of those illustrious imams, and be followed by the masses. It is for that reason that they raise objections like these. May Allah save us and the entire humanity from their evils.

When a person claims to be a Hanafi or Shafi or Maliki or Hanbali, all that he intends to say is that he follows the Sunnah of Muhammad in accordance with the understanding that Imam Abu Hanifa (or Imam Shafi) had of the Sunnah. He asserts that he does so only because he

doesn't possess the qualifications to extract rulings from the sources of the Shariah,hence he follows one of those imams who unanimously recognised and qualified to perform Ijtihad.

Indeed, the 4 imams were more knowledgeable about the book of allah and the sunnah of rasulullah than you and I. A story comes to mind which was narrated by Imam Tahawi and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal that Urwa ibnuz-Zubair objected to a ruling pertaining to Hajj which was being taught by Abdullah Ibn Abaas. The reason for this was because it contradicted the teachings of Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar. Ibn Abaas exclaimed "Your are going astray in this way! I quote to you the practise of the prophet (PBUH) and you tell me about Abu Bakr and Umar!" Urwah replied "Verily Abu Bakr and Umar were more knowledgeable about the practise of Rasulullah than you."
Shaykh Muhammad Awammah comments: "This is our answer to those people who invite us to abandon the Fiqh of our Imams: Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi and Ahmad.

It is for the same reason that the illustrious Muhaddith and Mujahid of Islam, Abdullah ibnul Mubarak used to say: "Do not say: (This is) the view of Abu Hanifah, but rather say: It is the explanation of the Hadith."

Ibn Taymiyyah writes in Ra'ful Malam: "Verily the imams who came before the period of compilation of the Books of Hadith were declared far more knowledgeable about the Sunnah than those who followed, because a large amount of hadith that reached them and were declared authentic by them, only reached us later via anonymous narrators, or with broken chains or did not reach us at all.

Our deen is systemised on Taqlid. Imam al Awzaii used to say: "The person who adopts all the rarities of the Ulama leaves the precincts of Islam." Imam Ali Ibn Al Ja-d attributes the practise upon the concessions of every Alim, then every evil will be gathered in you."

Allamah Ibnul Abididn narrates an incident about a Faqih who proposed for the hand of the daughter of a Muhadith in marriage. The Muhaddith laid a condition that he should practise 'Raf ul Yadain' (ie. Lift the hands before and after ruku) and he should say the Ameen out loudly in Salah. The Faqih submitted to those conditions and the Nikah took place
"The incident was mentioned to a pious person who, upon hearing this, dropped his head. After some time he raised it and remarked: " I have a fear that the Iman of this man may leave him, due to the fact that he abandoned an act which he practised on the basis of it being Sunnah,

and he substituted it with a contradictory deed without any Shariah reason, but for a worldly motive."
Another example is when the prophet of Allah (PBUH) narrated that 'you should wear white clothes'. Those that don't possess the qualification of Ijtihad will not understand that this statement is a mere recommendation and not an obligation.

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi narrates another incident from his personal experience. He writes:
"There is a village near our area, wherein a particular man married a certain woman. Later it was learnt that both of them were breastfed by the same woman, (thus being foster brother and sister). A person came to enquire from me what was to be done about the matter. I explained to him that this marriage is not correct and that they should be separated. He remarked: "This is going to be a source of immense disgrace. Please find a way for its permissibility?" I said to him:"Firstly! There is no disgrace in separation. Rather, in living together, there will be immense disgrace, because people will say that you have united a brother and a sister in marriage. Secondly,even if there is a disgrace, then let it be. When this is the command of the Shariah, then there is no question of disgrace." The man began to say: But he drank it and then vomited it out. So I told him: Whether he vomited it out or not, the law doesn't change."
"After receiving a clear answer from me, they proceeded to Dehli. There they found a man (who claims) to practise solely on Hadith (without a madhab). It is not my object right now to discuss him; however I do wish to explain their personal-interests. To achieve their aim, they went to this person to see if it could be fulfilled. He said, "If he had consumed less than 5 sips, she does not become impermissible for him (to marry)". They immediately wrote out a questionnaire stating that a man drinks two sips of milk from a woman during infancy. Does she become his foster mother? The answer was written with the hadith:
"One or Two sips do not create Prohibition."
The man became became very happy and proceeded to the husband and wife and handed the fatwa over to them saying "This after all is also an Alim's Fatwa. If we practise on it, there will be no harm."
Today,this is the kind of self-interest found in people. What concern was there about how many sips he had drunk? And if, hypothetically speaking, they had been aware of the number of sips that were drunk by the child, then on what basis did they take the fatwa of the one who granted permissibility, and discard the fatwa of the one who passed a ruling on impermissibility- in spite of the fact that the latter was of the very madh-hab of the person in question?

Amongst the conditions for making Taqlid of a particular Imam, is that:

a) His entire Madhab must have been compiled and available,
b) His principles of extracting laws from the original sources of Shariah (UsululFiqh) must also be available.
c) He should have left someone behind, who had studied “FIQH” at his hands and understood his complete concept of extracting Masail from Shariah sources.

If we were to soley base our beliefs on Hadith by using our own intellect to decipher rulings we would be unsuccessful. Imam Abu Mansur Ibn Muhammad Al Faqih stated that a person was praying but he before he commenced he placed a goat infront of him. Imam Abu Mansur questioned him regarding this. The man replied that it was proven that Rasulullah had a goat infront of him whilst praying. Unfortunately, the man didn’t realise due to his ignorance that the word he translated to mean ‘goat’ actually meant a ‘a certain kind of staff’. This was a mistake made by an Arabian man. Imagine the mistakes a layperson who barely knows Tajweed would make.

Maulana Sarfaraz tells us that in Sahih Bukhari (1/30,43) there is a hadith which states that Uthman narrated from Rasulullah that a person who has intercourse with his wife and does not ejaculate, has only to perform wudhu and not ghusl. If a person acts upon this hadith, then it can only be termed as a deviance, as this law was Mansukh (abrogated).

Maulana Sarfaraz also writes: “In another narration of Sahih Bukhari 1/25 (Hadith 177) and Sunan Tirmidhi 1/11 (hadith 75) etc. It is reported that: “When any one of you are in the masjid, and senses wind within his buttocks, then he should not leave (to perform whudhu) until he perceives a smell or hears a sound.” Now, if a person performing Salah passes wind, but due to not hearing any sound or finding any smell, continues with his Salah (because of having read this hadith) then what sort of piety is this?

By reading a hadith of this sort, without studying its explanation as given by the Fuqaha, one may be awfully misled. The translations of the books of Hadith are altogether void of explanations. Those who have studied Hadith under authorised scholars are well aware of the danger of reading these books without guidance.

Maulana Sarfaraz continues:"These incidents are daily occurrences. I have a very sincere friend who told me about his daughter in law who claims to be from the "Followers of Hadith". She maintains, and is persistent, that the Hadith only obligates one to throw three hands full of water over the head for ghusl from Janabah (when a bath becomes obligatory). She claims that Taharah (purity) can be attained by in this way, and that there is no need to pour water over the whole body. She insists: I have read this hadith in Bukhari." This became a cause of such a tension in her home that it eventually ended in Talaq (divorce). As for the narration, it is mentioned that Rasulullah poured water over his head thrice and then he poured over the rest of his body.

The above is a typical exam0ple of a very common occurrence. It is a known fact that Imam Bukhari would habitually cut up Ahadith into small sections and mention only the portion of hadith pertaining to his heading. But for a layperson to make judgements without reading the full hadith is a general mistake caused by ignorance.

A similar example is in Sahih Bukhari – where the prophet (PBUH) states that Nuh is the first Rasul. If we were to use this as evidence it would suggest he was the first ever messenger of god despite the fact that Adam is mentioned in the Quran as the first prophet sent by god. The reason the prophet stated Nuh to be the first Rasul is because he was the first prophet sent with his own scripture and message to preach. First we must understand the difference between a Rasul and a Nabi. Every Rasul is a Nabi but not every Nabi is necessarily a Rasul. And a Rasul's rank is higher than that of a Nabi. This man, through his 'intellectual ignorance', adopted the above mentioned belief that Nuh was sent before Adam. This belief contradicted the Quran, several other Ahadith and the consensus of the Sahaba. May Allah Save Us All.

Imam Kowthari has recorded some of these laughable incidents in the accounts of some Muhadditheen who made assumptions without contemplating the context of the hadith.

- A muhadith was noticed performing Salatul Witr whenever he used pebbles for Istinja (cleaning himself after urinating) – he based this upon a hadith which said "He who uses pebbles for istinja should do so in an odd number." Since the same verb is used for Salatul-Witr, the muhadith took the wrong meaning for the Hadith.

- Another Muhadith concluded from the following hadith that it was forbidden for him to water his neighbour's garden:
 "It is not permitted for one who believes in Allah and the last day to irrigate someone else's crop with his own water".
 The Hadith actually implies that, if someone receives a pregnant captive women in war-booty, then he is prohibited from copulating with her until she gives birth.

 This is why Imam Malik said that Hadith without Fiqh is dangerous.

The harms that come about from not following a madhab are innumerable, as they affect and encompass masail (laws) pertaining to almost every branch of Deen. However, the more salient ones may be summarised as follows:

a) Discrediting the scholars that passed from the time of the Tabiin until the present day.

An example of this is the open declaration by Shaykh Suhaymi (a salafi scholar) who claimed that Imam Nawawi was a "FASIQ". Imam Nawawi is considered to be amongst the greatest Shafii scholars and an authority in the fields of Fiqh and Hadith. He was a prolific author in the said field. His status is acknowledged by the entire Ummah ever since his era. Suhaymi;s basis is that Imam Nawawi's beliefs were not in conformance to his. This he stated during a discourse of his in Al-Masjidun-Nabawi, and during one of his visits to South Africa as well.

This is only one example amongst many others. How many illustrious Ulama were even declared Kaafir by some of their scholars! A graduate of the Islamic University Of Medina Munnawarah wrote to me thus: "A certain Tamimi from Madina made remarks that induced students to declare Imam Ghazali a kaafir."

Consider the above, and relate it to the statement made by Abdullah Ibnul Mubarak which he made to a huge mass of people: "Abandon the Hadith of Amr Ibn Thabit, because her blasphemes the earlier scholars."

In fact, their level of disloyalty towards the Ulama of the past has reached such extremes, that they now distort the books of prior scholars and publish them with these distortions. The following is an example:

Shaykh Muhammad Awwammah writes: “Yes, part of the disloyalty and deceitfulness is the altering of the texts of the Ulama and distorting them. This occurs with some of the dissenters from the truth. The most recent of whom I am aware to have fallen into this abyss is Proffessor Abdul Qadir Arns-ut May Allah forgive him and return him to the truth. This occurred in the last edition (1409 A.H) of the book ‘Al-Adhkar’ of Imam Nawawi.

b) The spread of the study of Hadith without the guidance of a qualified teacher

This leads to distortion within the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH). The Muhaddithin sacrificed their entire lives for the preservation of every word of the Ahadith, and standardised the principles thereof. One of the most important among those principles is (talaqqi) which means to receive the wording as well as its explanation from a qualified scholar, who received his knowledge through an authentic chain which links up to Rasulullah. About the importance of talaqqi., and what harm is caused by its absence when studying hadith.

No doubt that some hadith and quran ayats are very simple and straightforward. These ayats are easy for a layperson to contemplate and understand. For example: In Surah Al-hujjajat verse 12 it says: Do not backbite.
An example from the hadith is “There is no preference of an Arab over a non-Arab.” This Hadith is also clear and uncomplicated. A rudimentary knowledge of Arabic would enable its understanding. Conversely, there are many commandments in the Quran and Sunnah which are ambigious. In some cases, some hadith contradicts and displace another. For example: *“Whoever has an Imam, then the Imam’s recitation is his recitation.”* This seems to indicate while the Imam is reciting in Salah, the muqtaqi (follower) should remain silent. However, another Hadith says: “There is no salaat for he who does not recite Surah Al-Fatiha.” This hadith seems to indicate that everyone should recite Surah Al-Fatiha. The question arises whether the first hadith shouldbe taken as the primary source referring to the Imam or the one who offers Salat individually and the second Hadith explained as a corroborating evidence; or should we make the second hadith the base and that the first hadith refers to the Imam’s recitation after he recites Surah Fatiha.

This is another reason as to why we do taqleed and leave the Ijtihad for the four imams. Imam Abu Hanifa states that reading Surah Fatiha behind an Imam is not necessary but Imam Shafi has stated that the prayer is incomplete without the muqtadis reciting Fatiha.

The famous hanafi jurist, Shaykh Abdul Ghani Al-Nablusi states: “The issues which are agreed upon- without any doubt and by necessity- do not require any Taqleed of any of the four imams like the obligation of Salaat, Fasting, Zakaat and Hajj, etc. And like the prohibition of adultery and fornication, drinking wine, murder, stealing and usurping. The issues which are debated are the issues where Taqleed becomes necessary.”

Shaykh Kathib Al-Baghdadi writes: “As far as Islamic rules are concerned, there are of two types. The first are those which are known by necessity to be part of the deen of the prophet (PBUH) – like Salah, Zakaat, Sawm, Hajj; the prohibition of adultery, wine and so on. Taqleed is not allowed in these issues since they are such that everyone should know and understand. The second type are those set of rules which need to be understood and extrapolated such as the details of the rituals of worship, transactions and weddings, for example, Taqleed is allowed in these situations since Allah says:

“So ask the people of remembrance if you know not.” (Surah An-Nahl: 43)

The only reason a Muqallid follows an Imam is because of the conviction that the Mujtahid has insight into the Quran and Sunnah. Salafis claim that following an Imam is “blind-following” and Shirk. However, considering all the daleels (evidences) in favour of following the rules given by Imams they have yet again been proven wrong.

Mufti Taqi Usmani Sahib writes in his book “The legal status of

following an Imam” that “resorting to a Mujtahid is necessary to

understand the complex interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah.

Thus, there are no grounds to accuse those who practise Taqleed

of following the Imams of Ijtihad rather than the Quran and Sunnah. Rather, Taqleed facilitates the following of the Quran and Sunnah.

People would seek fatwa from ‘ulama’ since the earliest of times in matters which they were in need of, because the majority of people are not able to derive the rulings of the Shari‘ah from their original sources. Thus, it would be necessary for them to refer to those who have knowledge of these rulings. This is what Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) ordered in His noble saying: “So ask the people of remembrance if you do not know.” (16:43) And as long as a mufti is trusted in his knowledge and his piety, they would not demand evidence for what he said – and this is the technical meaning of *taqlid*, since they defined it as: “Acting on the opinion of another without knowing his evidence or demanding proof.”
However, in the best of generations, they would not restrict themselves to taking fatwa from a single scholar, such that they would not permit seeking fatwa from another scholar, although when individuals had a particular affinity with a scholar of a certain land, their reliance on him would be greater than others, so by virtue of that affinity, they would refer to that scholar in all matters or most of them.

Of this is what al-Bukhari transmitted from ‘Ikrimah that the people of Madinah would ask Ibn ‘Abbas: “Is it permissible for a woman [that is a pilgrim], when she is menstruating, to set off for her hometown after the Tawaf al-Ziyarah and omit the Tawaf al-Wida‘?” Ibn ‘Abbas answered them by [saying]that it is permissible for her to set off and omit the Tawaf al-Wida‘. They said to him: “We will not adopt your opinion, and leave the opinion of Zayd.” In the transmission of al-Isma‘ili: “We do not care, whether you have issued us a fatwa or you have not issued us a fatwa. Zayd ibn Thabit says: ‘She does not set off.’” In the transmission of al-Tayalisi: “We will not follow you, Ibn ‘Abbas, when you oppose Zayd.” This is because they had greater confidence in Zayd ibn Thabit. Later, Zayd ibn Thabit retracted from his opinion when he came to know of the hadith of Safiyyah, as transmitted by Muslim from Tawus: “I was with Ibn ‘Abbas when Zayd ibn Thabit said to him: ‘You issue fatwa that a menstruating woman departs before having her final meeting with the House?’ Ibn ‘Abbas said: ‘At the least, ask so-and-so Ansari woman: Did the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) command her?’” He said: “Subsequently, Zayd ibn Thabit returned to Ibn ‘Abbas, laughing,

and saying: ‘I do not believe but that you told the truth!’” When Zayd ibn Thabit (Allah be pleased with him) retracted, the people of Madinah were content that it is permissible for her to set off [before performing the Tawaf al-Wida‘].

And of this is what Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) transmitted from Abu Muslim al-Khawlani (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him), he said: “I came to the mosque of the Damascenes, when there was a circle therein comprising of senior companions of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), and there was a youth amongst them with kohl on his eyes and bright teeth. Whenever they differed in anything, they referred it to the young man, a youthful young man.” He said: “I asked a sitting-companion of mine: ‘Who is this?’ He said: ‘This is Mu‘adh ibn Jabal.’” And in another narration: “Whenever they differed over anything, they referred it to him and they departed on his opinion.”

Examples of this are many.

The upshot is that most people would refer to those they trusted, and they would prefer his fatwas over the fatwas of others. There were some who did not suffice with seeking fatwa from a single scholar, because the madhhabs were not codified in that time, so they did not believe it was forbidden to seek fatwa from anyone that was accessible to them, even if it was someone besides whom they normally referred to. There was no fear at that time that people would select from the different madhhabs that which accorded with their passions because it was difficult for the questioner to know the opinion of the one he is seeking fatwa from before he asked him, which was because the madhhabs were not yet codified.

But after the codification of the four madhhabs of jurisprudence with a specific structure, and books were compiled on them, and they condensed into schools which were dedicated to studying them, and the opinions of these madhhabs became well-known and familiar to the people, if it was permitted for everyone to select from these opinions whatever he wished whenever he wished, that would lead to following desires and not following the bright Shari‘ah. There is no doubt that each of these jurists only selected an opinion on the basis of the strength of its evidence according to him not on the basis of what his heart desired, so it would be possible for another mujtahid to select or reject what he said

due to a stronger evidence that appeared to him from the sources of Islamic legislation. However, the layperson who is not able to compare between these opinions on the basis of the evidences of the Shari‘ah, if he was given the option to adopt what he wished and reject whatever he wished, it would be feared for him that he will adopt from these opinions that which accords with his desires, and not because of the proof of the Shari‘ah that was the basis of that opinion.

Furthermore, each one of these madhhabs has a specific structure under the remit of which it operates, whereby many of its rulings are linked to each other. Thus, if one ruling from it is adopted and another ruling that is linked to it is omitted, the structure would collapse, and a situation of *talfiq*(mixing opinions from different madhhabs on a single issue) – not taken as valid by anyone – may arise.

It is difficult for a layperson to appreciate these subtleties, so if the door of selecting was to be opened for the layperson, that would lead to chaos in the laws of the bright Shari‘ah. It was for this [reason]that a need arose to adopt a specific madhhab, not because the follower of a particular madhhab believes his Imam is an intrinsic authority – protection is from Allah, the Glorious! – but, because he trusts his knowledge in the Shari‘ah and its proofs more than others, or because knowledge of his madhhab is easier for him with respect to the founders of the other madhhabs.

By such adoption of madhhabs, the circumstances of the people – in terms of faithfulness to the Shari‘ah and not following haphazard whims therein – were regulated, because selecting from the opinions of the jurists based on whim and not on the basis of evidence is from that which the scholars, both ancient and recent, have condemned. Imam Ma‘mar ibn Rashid (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: “If a man was to adopt the opinion of the people of Madinah on listening to songs and approaching women from their behinds, and the opinion of the people of Makkah on temporary marriage and barter, and the opinion of the people of Kufah on intoxicating substances, he would be from the worst of the slaves of Allah.” (*Talkhis al-Habir*, 3:187)

Hafiz Ibn Taymiyyah (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: “An example of this is that a man believes in the validity of the pre-emption[1] of a neighbour when he demands it, and its invalidity when he is the buyer, because this is not permissible by consensus; and likewise, one who assumes the validity of the guardianship of a sinner in the

process of his marriage and assumes the invalidity of his guardianship in the process of his divorce – this is not permissible by consensus of the Muslims. If a particular questioner said: 'I was not aware of that, and from today I am adhering to this,' that would not be [accepted]from him because it would open the door to playing with the religion and open the means to legalisation and illegalisation being according to whims." (*Majmu' al-Fatawa li Bni Taymiyyah*, 32:101)

Imam al-Nawawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: "Its reason is that if it were permissible to adhere to any madhhab one wished, it would lead to collecting the concessions of the madhhabs, in accordance with one's desires, and opting between legalisation and illegalisation, obligation and permission, and this will lead to relinquishing the noose of moral responsibility (*taklif*); as distinguished from the early period, because [at that time]there were no refined madhhabs that encompassed the rulings of [all]outcomes. Based on this, it is necessary for him to make effort in opting for one madhhab he will adhere to specifically." (*al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, 1:55)

Ibn Khaldun (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: "*Taqlid* in all towns came to rest on these four, and *muqallid*s of other than them have disappeared. The people blocked the door of disagreement and its paths when the diversification of the technical terms of the sciences became extensive; and when it became difficult to reach the level of ijtihad; and when it was feared that [somebody]unqualified for it whose opinion and religion are not trusted would be ascribed to it; so they [i.e. scholars] made [their]incapacity and deficiency clear, and they directed people to *taqlid* of these [four], to all who are specialised therein from the *muqallid*s, and they forbade modification of their *taqlid* because it would imply frivolity. All that remained after authentication of the basic texts and connecting their chains by narration is transmission of their madhhabs, and each *muqallid*acting on the madhhab of the one he does *taqlid* of from them. There is no meaning to jurisprudence today besides this. And the claim of ijtihad in this age is rejected and turned on its heel, and his *taqlid* is abandoned. The people of Islam have evolved into *taqlid* of these four Imams." (*Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun*, p. 430)

Shaykh Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: "Know that the people in the first and second centuries were not united on *taqlid* of one specified madhhab, and after the second century, there appeared amongst them adherence to the madhhabs of specific mujtahids, and those who did not rely on the madhhab of a specific mujtahid became few – and this was the obligation of that time.

If you say: How is it that one thing is not obligatory at one time, but obligatory at another time, although the Shari‘ah is one? I say: The original obligation is that there are those in the ummah who are aware of the corollary rulings from their detailed evidences. The people of truth are united on this. And the prelude to an obligation is obligatory. When there are many avenues to that obligation, it is necessary to acquire any avenue from those avenues without particularisation, but when one avenue becomes specified, that one avenue itself becomes obligatory…Based on this, it should be that the result is the obligation of *taqlid* of a specific imam." (*al-Insaf fi Bayan Asbab al-Ikhtilaf*, p. 68, 70)

He said at another place: "Indeed these four codified and refined madhhabs have united the ummah, or those who are noteworthy from them, on the permissibility of *taqlid* of them, to this day of ours. In this are interests that are not hidden, especially in these days in which aspirations are very shunted and souls are given to desire and every holder of an opinion is impressed by his own opinion."

Although the mujtahid jurists were widespread in every region of the Muslim regions, it was the will of Allah (Exalted is He) that no madhhab would be codified with a total composition in the way the madhhabs of the four jurists were codified, and their affiliation to them was mass-transmitted, and their pupils who studied them and examined them and drew corollaries from them overflowed. Such a thing did not happen to the other madhhabs. Shaykh Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: "In sum, adopting the madhhab of the mujtahids is a secret that Allah (Exalted is He) inspired to the 'ulama', and He united them upon it, whether consciously [on their part]or unconsciously." (*al-Insaf*, p. 73)

This is why the 'ulama' said that it is obligatory for the non-mujtahid to do *taqlid* of one of these four madhhabs, and not do *taqlid* of a madhhab besides them.

Imam al-Nawawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: "He does not have the option of adopting the madhhab of any of the imams of the Sahabah (Allah be pleased with them) and other than them from the early ones, although they were more learned and of a higher rank than those after them, because they did not devote themselves to codifying knowledge, and delineating its principles and its branches, as none of them have a refined, codified and approved madhhab. Only those who came after them took up this [task]from the Imams affiliated with the madhhabs of the Sahabah and the Tabi‘in, who began to lay out the laws of outcomes before their occurrence, and who set out to

elucidate their principles and their branches, like Malik, Abu Hanifah, and others." (*al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, 1:55)

Al-Munawi transmitted from Hafiz al-Dhahabi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on them) that he said: "It is necessary for us to believe that the four Imams, the two Sufyans, al-Awza'i, Dawud al-Zahiri, Ishaq ibn Rahwayh, and all the Imams, were upon guidance, and no attention is paid to those who speak against them with what they are free from. The truth in accordance with the majority is that the one who is right in the corollaries is one, and Allah (Exalted is He) has a sign in what He has decreed, and that the mujtahid is given the responsibility of finding it, and that the one who misses it is not sinful, but is rewarded. Thus, the one who is right has two rewards, and the one who errs has one reward. Yes, if the mujtahid is deficient [in his knowledge], he is sinful, by agreement, and [it is necessary]for the non-mujtahid to do *taqlid* of a specific madhhab…but it is not permissible to do *taqlid* of the Sahabah and likewise the Tabi'in, as stated by Imam al-Haramayn, of all whose madhhab has not been codified, so *taqlid* of other than the four [Imams] in judicial decree and fatwa is prohibited, because the four madhhabs have spread and have been codified, such that the conditions of their absolutes and the specifications of their generalities are clear; as distinguished from [madhhabs]besides them due to the extinction of their followers.

Imam al-Razi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) transmitted consensus of the verifiers on the prohibition of laypeople doing *taqlid* of individuals from the Sahabah and their elders." (*Fayd al-Qadir* by al-Munawi, 1:210) - although some may argue he possessed the capability to do some form of Ijtihad, he nonetheless resorted to taqleed as this was the safer option.

Shaykh Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said in another place: "Know that there is great welfare in adopting these four madhhabs, and in turning away from all of them is great corruption, and we will explain that with reasons…" (*'Iqd al-Jid*, p. 53) He said in another place: "So when an ignorant person is in the lands of India or the lands of Transoxiana, and there is no Shafi'i, Maliki or Hanbali scholar there, and no book from the books of those madhhabs, it is necessary for him to do *taqlid* of the madhhab of Abu Hanifah, and it is forbidden for him to leave his madhhab, because by doing so he will release [himself from]the noose of the Shari'ah and will remain aimless and without purpose; as distinguished from the situation where one is in the two Harams, because there it is easy for him to know all the

madhhabs. It is not sufficient for him to adopt [the opinions of the madhhab]by speculation and without assurance, nor to take from the tongues of the commoners, nor to take from an unknown book, all of which are mentioned in *al-Nahr al-Fa'iq Sharh Kanz al-Daqa'iq*." (*al-Insaf fi Bayan Asbab al-Ikhtilaf*, pp. 77-8)

It is apparent from all of this that the objective is adherence to what has come of the laws of the Shari'ah in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and that it is not usually easy for a non-mujtahid to derive these laws by himself, either because he is unable to understand them, or because the texts hold more than one meaning, or due to the apparent contradiction of evidences, so he relies on the opinion of a mujtahid whose opinion he has trust in over other than him, or the opinion of a mujtahid whose madhhab is well-known in his land. This is adoption of a madhhab (*tamadhhub*) or individual *taqlid* (*al-taqlid al-shakhsi*).

However, adopting a specific madhhab is not negated by a learned scholar – who has insight into the evidences of the laws in an issue from the issues – adopting the opinion of another madhhab, not on the basis of whim, but on the basis of a stronger evidence that appears to him. Based on this, many of the jurists of the Hanafis issue fatwa in many issues according to an opinion that opposes the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him), as they did in the issue of cropsharing (*muzara'ah*), and taking payment for teaching the Noble Qur'an, and in the issue of a person duped [in a monetary transaction]having the option [to cancel the deal]and other well-known issues.

This is due to what our 'ulama' have stated explicitly that *taqlid* of a specific Imam is not a ruling of the Shari'ah *per se*, but it is only a fatwa that was issued in order to regulate the affairs of religion, and to avoid what was feared in not doing so, of the corruptions of playing [with the religion]and following desires.

Mufti Taqi Usmani relates: "I heard my father 'Allamah Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) relate numerous times the statement of Shaykh al-Hind Imam Shaykh Mahmud al-Hasan (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) say: "Indeed *taqlid* of a specific madhhab is not a ruling of the Shari'ah *per se*, but it is a fatwa that was issued in order the regulate the religion by means of it."

Imam Shaykh Ashraf ‘Ali al-Thanawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said in one of his sermons: “Thus, we do not believe that individual *taqlid* is mandatory or obligatory in itself, but we say that the affairs of religion are regulated by individual *taqlid*, and there is chaos in abandoning *taqlid*.” (*Khutbat Hakim al-Ummat*, 6:172)

From the corollaries of this viewpoint is that whenever there is safety from following desires, there is no harm in adopting that which is stronger in evidence for a scholar that is qualified to examine the evidences.

Imam Faqih Shaykh Rashid Ahmad al-Gongohi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said: “Indeed the jurists banned the laypeople from non-individual *taqlid* (which is *taqlid* of a madhhab in one issue and another in another issue) for the reason of these [corrupt consequences]. However a scholar who is safe from these corrupt consequences, it is permissible for him to exercise non-individual *taqlid* even today, with the condition that he does not cause confusion and chaos thereby amongst the commoners.” (*Tadhkirat al-Rashid*, 1:132)

He said in another place: “The upshot is that when it is established that this ruling from our Imam goes against the Book and Sunnah, it is necessary for every believer to leave it, and no one will deny this after it becomes clear, but how is it possible for laypeople to verify this matter?”

The teacher of our teachers, Imam Ashraf ‘Ali al-Thanawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him), explained this matter with extreme moderation and balance, so there is no harm in citing his statement with his wording followed by its Arabic translation:

Just as rejecting *taqlid* is deserving of censure, extremism and rigidity therein is also deserving of condemnation. It has preceded that a mujtahid is not imitated with the belief that he is the lawgiver and bringer of laws, but he is only imitated with the belief that he is a clarifier of the laws and an elucidator of the legislations and one who reveals the intent of Allah (Exalted is He) and the Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace). This is why *taqlid* is only acted upon when a matter negating that belief or eliminating it does not arise.
Thus, if it is clear to a scholar with depth of insight, perception of mind, fairness of temperament, by his investigation, or to a layperson through the medium of that scholar by the testimony of his heart – with the

condition that he is fearful [of Allah](*muttaqi*) – that the stronger [position]in this issue is another opinion, it will be examined if there is any possibility for the permissibility of acting on the weaker position based on the evidence of the Shari‘ah or not? If there is scope there, and it is feared that in publicising the disagreement there will be tribulation and confusion amongst the commoners, it is better in such a situation to act on the weaker position, to save the common Muslims from division. This is proven by what ‘A’ishah (Allah – Exalted is He – be pleased with her) narrated, she said: “The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: ‘Do you not see that your people, when they [re-]built the Ka‘bah, they were deficient in [building it on]the foundations of Ibrahim?’ So I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! Will you not return it to the foundations of Ibrahim?’ So he said: ‘If it were not for the recentness of your people in disbelief, I would have done [so].’” The Six transmitted it besides Abu Dawud. So despite building the Ka‘bah on the foundations of Ibrahim (upon him peace) being superior, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) opted for the weaker option, for fear of tribulation and confusion, because this weaker option was permissible in the Shari‘ah, even if weak…

Likewise it is narrated from Ibn Mas‘ud (Allah – Exalted is He – be pleased with him) that he prayed four (meaning, in travel), so it was said to him: “You criticise ‘Uthman [for praying four in travel], and then you prayed four?!” He said: “Dissention is evil.” Abu Dawud transmitted it. So despite it being stronger according to Ibn Mas‘ud (Allah – Exalted is He – be pleased with him) to shorten [the prayer]in travel, he prayed it in full to avoid dissention and evil. Apparently, he believed in the validity of that also, so by this what we mentioned – that if the weaker option is permissible, opting for it is better to avoid tribulation and confusion – is strengthened.

However, if the weaker option does not allow for permissibility, rather it necessitates the omission of an obligation or the performance of a prohibition, and it has no evidence besides analogy, and there is an explicit authentic hadith for the stronger side, it is necessary to act on the hadith without hesitation, and *taqlid* is not permissible in this situation at all, because the foundation of religion is the Noble Qur’an and the Sunnah, and the objective of *taqlid* is nothing besides acting on them with ease and safety. So when the harmony between them [i.e. *taqlid*and acting on the Qur’an and Sunnah] is negated, it is necessary to act on the Qur’an and Sunnah, and rigidity on *taqlid* in such a situation is the *taqlid* on which censure has occurred in the Qur’an and Sunnah and the statement of the ‘ulama’. Thus it is narrated from ‘Adiyy ibn Hatim

(Allah – Exalted is He – be pleased with him), he said: “I came to the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), and I heard him recite: ‘They have taken their rabbis and their monks as gods beside Allah’ (9:31) He said: ‘They would not worship them, but when they made anything halal, they considered it halal, and when they made anything haram, they made it haram.’” Al-Tirmidhi transmitted it.

And the practice of the Salaf and the verifiers has always been that whenever it appears to them that their opinion or the opinion of another goes against the command of Allah (Exalted is He) or His Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) they renounce it immediately, as is narrated from Numaylah al-Ansari (Allah be pleased with him), he said: Ibn ‘Umar (Allah – Exalted is He – be pleased with them) was asked about eating hedgehog, so he recited: “Say: I do not find, in what has been revealed to me, anything prohibited for anyone who eats” [to the end of]the verse (6:145). So a shaykh next to him said: I heard Abu Hurayrah say: Hedgehog was mentioned before the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace), and he said: “An impurity from the impurities,” so Ibn ‘Umar said: “If the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said this, it is as he said, as we did not know.” Abu Dawud transmitted it.

The ‘ulama’ of the Hanafis also remained on the practice of this principle, so they left the opinions of their Imam in a number of issues, and by this it becomes clear to every fair person that what some people accuse them of, of fanaticism and rigid *taqlid*, is a clear error which resulted from looking at the transmissions without understanding…However, it is not permissible, despite abandoning *taqlid* in this issue, to attack the honour of the mujtahid by lengthening the tongue against his respected self or holding a bad opinion in the heart that he abandoned an authentic hadith, because it is possible that that hadith did not reach him, or it reached him with a weak chain, or that hadith was interpreted by him with an indication of the Shari‘ah. So he is excused. And vilifying the perfection of their knowledge due to being unacquainted with that hadith falls under the totality of lengthening the tongue against them because it is established that some hadiths did not reach some of the senior Sahabah regarding whose perfect knowledge there is no doubt, and that was not considered a deficiency in their perfection. Thus it is narrated from ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) in the story of the seeking of permission by Abu Musa (Allah – Exalted is He – be pleased with him) the statement of ‘Umar (Allah – Exalted is He – be pleased

with him): “This command of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was hidden to me. Trading and markets distracted me.” Al-Bukhari transmitted it.

Likewise when a *muqallid* of that mujtahid, his breast has not expanded in that issue, and he thinks – due to good opinion of the mujtahid – that his opinion does not go against the hadith, so he continues to do *taqlid* of him in that issue due to this opinion, and he does not reject the authentic hadith, but he does not understand the agreement of his Imam with that authentic hadith in detail, it is not permissible to blame that *muqallid*, because he is also adhering to evidence of the Shari‘ah, and he does not aim but adherence to the Shari‘ah; and likewise it is not permissible for that *muqallid* to condemn that scholar who left *taqlid* in that issue due to the aforementioned reason, because this variation of theirs is akin to the variation which occurred amongst the Salaf and on which the ‘ulama’ said: “Indeed our madhhab is correct – probabilistically – with the possibility of being incorrect, and the madhhab of others is incorrect – probabilistically – with the possibility of being correct.” So when the other side has the possibility of being correct also, how can it be permissible, because of that, to declare any [of them]misguided, or to declare him a sinner, or to accuse him of bid‘ah, or Wahhabiyyah, and cause envy, rancour, obstinacy, dissension, backbiting, insult, abuse, vilification and curse which are absolutely forbidden?!

Yes, the man who opposes the majority of the Muslims in their beliefs or in matters that are agreed-upon, or he extends his tongue with respect to the righteous Salaf, he is out of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jama‘ah, because the Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jama‘ah are those who tread the path of the Sahabah, and these matters go against their beliefs, so this man is outside of the Ahl al-Sunnah and included within the people of innovations and passions. And similar is the man who is extreme in his *taqlid* whereby he rejects the Qur’an and hadith because of it. So it is necessary to avoid and stay clear of these two men while shunning the well-known debates. This is the balanced truth. Anything besides it is error and excess. O Allah! Show us the truth as truth and grant us adherence to it, and show us falsehood as falsehood, and grant us avoidance of it. (*al-Iqtisad fi l-Taqlid wa l-Ijtihad*, pp. 84-9)

It is clear from this that adopting a specific madhhab and doing *taqlid* of a mujtahid is not [done]but to arrive at what is established from the rulings of the Shari‘ah from the Book and Sunnah for those who are not able to reconcile between contradictory evidences. This is why the ‘ulama’ have clearly stated that there is no need for *taqlid* in creed and

rulings that are stated explicitly, like the obligation of Salah, fasting, Zakah and Hajj, and the prohibition of wine, swine, usury, lying, deception and treachery, from the rulings in which there is no room for ijtihad, and the texts on them do not hold more than one interpretation. (See *al-Dhakhirah* by al-Qarafi, 1:148)

Likewise, adopting a madhhab does not mean the 'ulama' of that madhhab do not go against the opinion of their Imam in any of the issues. From this is what is narrated from Imam al-Tahawi – and he was a Hanafi in madhhab – that he said: "Abu 'Ubayd ibn Harbawayh would revise rulings with me. So I answered him one day regarding an issue, and he said to me: 'This is not the opinion of Abu Hanifah.' Thereupon, I said to him: 'O Qadi! Do I take everything Abu Hanifah said?' He said: 'I did not think you but a *muqallid*.' I said to him: 'Does any do *taqlid* besides a fanatic?' He said to me: 'Or an idiot.' Then this statement flew across Egypt until it became a proverb."
That which al-Tahawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) intended was that adopting a specific madhhab does not negate that a scholar like al-Tahawi adopts an opinion besides the opinion of his Imam in an issue, otherwise he will be a fanatic.

From this, it becomes clear that *taqlid* has [four]levels:
1. The first level is the *taqlid* of the layperson who does not have knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, nor mastery of the sciences derived from them. Those who graduate from the seminars (*madaris*) and religious universities and have not acquired an ability by which they are able to compare between juristic opinions in light of the Book and Sunnah are included amongst them. The ruling of these [people]is that they adhere to the madhhab of a specific Imam, and they do not adopt [anything]besides the opinions of their Imam, because the opinion of their Imam is a proof with respect to them, and they do not have the right to assess whether the opinions of their Imam are against the Book and Sunnah by their mere opinion, because that which is necessary for such an assessment is not available to them.
2. The second level is the *taqlid* of the learned scholar, who, although he has not reached the level of complete *ijtihad*, but because of the expanse of his knowledge of the sciences of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and his mastery in the madhhab of his Imam, and his extensive experience of jurisprudence and fatwa with skilled teachers, he acquired a strong ability to inspect the evidences of the jurisprudential rulings. Although such a scholar does *taqlid* of his Imam in most of the chapters of jurisprudence, nonetheless, when he finds an opinion of his Imam

against a clear text and he does not find, despite his lengthy investigation, anything that contradicts that text, it is permissible for him to leave the opinion of his Imam because of that clear text, as we have mentioned previously from the statement of Imam Shaykh Ashraf ‘Ali al-Thanawi (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him). Likewise, when such a scholar feels that in the madhhab of his Imam in an issue from the issues there is a severe crisis, and that there is a widespread need to avert this crisis by opting for another juristic madhhab from the four followed madhhabs, it is permissible for him to issue fatwa or act on the opinion of another mujtahid besides his Imam, just as the Hanafis did in the issue of the wife of a lost man and other [issues], as will come – if Allah (Exalted is He) wills – in its place. However, the most precautious [route]in this age in the issues in which there is a widespread affliction is that a man does not act independently in such issues with his individual opinion; rather, he consults other ‘ulama’, and he does not issue a general fatwa except after acquiring the agreement of a body of firmly-grounded scholars.

3. The third level is the *taqlid* of a mujtahid in the madhhab, and he is the one who, although he is a *muqallid* of his Imam in the principles, nonetheless, he has acquired a degree of ijtihad in the peripherals or in the jurisprudential cases (*nawazil*). The scholars of extraction (*takhrij*) and assessment (*tarjih*) and the mujtahids in jurisprudential issues (*masa’il*) are included in this as will come – if Allah (Exalted is He) wills.

4. The fourth level is the *taqlid* of an absolute mujtahid, because although he is independent in deriving the laws of the Shari‘ah from the Book and Sunnah, but he has no alternative but to [exercise]a degree of *taqlid*, which is tfhat he examines the statements of the Salaf from the Sahabah and Tabi‘in, and holds to them in the explanation of the rulings of the Qur’an and Sunnah. And at times there is no clear text from the Book and Sunnah, but there is a statement from one of the Sahabah or Tabi‘in, so he gives it preference over his personal opinion. This is just as Abu Hanifah (Allah be pleased with him) often adopted the opinion of Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i, and al-Shafi‘i the opinion of Ibn Jurayj, and Malik the opinion of one of the seven jurists of the Illuminated City. ‘Allamah Ibn al-Qayyim (Allah – Exalted is He – have mercy on him) said about the absolute mujtahid: “His ijtihad does not negate his *taqlid* of other than him at times, for you will not find any of the Imams, but he is a *muqallid* of one who is more learned that him in some rulings. And indeed al-Shafi‘i (Allah have mercy on him and be pleased with him) said in a place of Hajj: ‘I said this doing *taqlid* of ‘Ata’.’” (*I‘lam al-Muwaqqi‘in* 4:179)

Usul al-Ifta’ wa Adabuh, Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani, pp 61 – 84

The concept of Taqleed in the Quran

Both classifications of Taqleed, in the form mentioned above, are found in the Quran. The following selected verses of the Quran demonstrate this:
Verse Number 1: “O you who believe! Follow Allah; follow the messenger and those of authority (Amr) amongst you.”
(Surah Al Nisaa:59)

That of authority (amr) has been explained by some as the jurists. This was the opinion of Abdullah ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Atta ibn abi rabah, Ataa ibn Saib, Hasan of Busra, Abu Aliyah and many others.

Verse Number 2: “And when there comes to them a matter concerning (public) safety or fear, they relay it. If they had only reffered it to the Messenger and to those of authority,those who can investigate and extract (information) amongst them would know (the rumour’s validity)...”
(Surah Al Nisaa:83)

The reason this verse was revealed was regarding the hypocrites of Medinah. However, it is very well established in the principles of tafseer and jurisprudence that in extracting rules and laws from specific circumstances of revelation, the specific details give way to the general meaning of the text – such a general principle is contained in the verse quoted above. The principle is that: those who do not possess the tools of investigation should refer to those who can. This is precisely Taqleed.

Verse number 3: “ O Believers! Obey Allah, the messenger and those authorities amongst you.” (4:59)

According to the interpretation of Sayyiduna Jabir Ibn Abdullah and Sayyiduna Abdulllah Ibn Abbas “Those of authorities...” implies to the jurists and scholars. (Ahlamul Quran Volume 2 Page 210)
Some people object that according to the backdrop of the revelation, this verse implies to obeying the leaders as opposed to the jurists and scholars. In response to this, the prime objective of following authorities is to ensure one is following the commandments of Allah and His messenger. The leaders who themselves follow Shariah in its entirety and are able to resort to the sources, must be followed. This can equally apply to the Mujtahids also, as suggested by the above Companions. Had the verse been restricted to the leaders only, then there would have been no scope of eminent Sahabah such as Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Abaas to interpret otherwise.

Verse Number 4: “Had they referred the matter to the Messenger and those of authority amongst them, then surely those who infer the matter (by investigating) would come to know of it.” (3:83)

Inferring matters by investigation can also apply to Qiyas (analogical deduction) and Ijtihad in contemporaty cases. This is only possible for those who are qualified and possess profound insight into such matters. (Ahkamul Quran Volume 2, Page 262, Roohul Maani Volume 5, Page 85)

This verse emphatically alerts the layman to resort to expert opinion in matters they have no knowledge of, especially in matters of Ijtihad and ambigious texts. There are endless cases of jurisprudence where the jurists have differed amongst themselves. Each jurist infers a ruling based on his qualified interpretation of the detail evidences, in light of his Usul ul-Fiqh.

It is not possible for a layperson to differentiate and distinguish between sound and weak evidences. Consequently, he will brand others to be wrong whilst considering his interpretation to be correct. This is the approach and practise of so many youths today. A jurists opinion that conflicts with an authentic hadith, does not mean he has discarded the sunnah. The jurist may have other supporting evidences and reasons for not acting upon a particular Hadeeth, as was illustrated in the previous example (Classifications of texts).

To summarise the above verse suggests that those who possess knowledge and the right tools of inferring legal rulings are vested with the authority to disclose the law of Allah through intense research of the Shariah sources.

Verse number 5: “So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know.” (16:43)

Allamah Alusi, a renowned commentator of the Quran, comments on this verse,

“There are those who have permitted Taqleed of a Mujtahid from this verse, stating that if a person is not a Mujtahid, it becomes mandatory upon him to follow and resort to a Mujtahid scholar due to the command. “So ask... and the correct position is that there is no distinction (in

following) between theological or jurist matters and a Mujtahid whether he is alive or deceased." (Roohul Maani Volume 7 Page 387)

This verse with its commentary is self-explanatory, suggesting the obligation of a layman to resort to the view of a Mujtahid matters pertaining to the Deen.

The types of Taqlid

There are two forms of Taqleed; the first is called Taqleed Am; an unrestricted form of adherence whereby, one chooses to follow a particular scholar or school in one particular legal issue and another scholar or school in a different legal issue.

The second is called Taqleed Shakshi, a restricted form of Taqleed whereby an individual follows a particular school or scholar in all legal matters.

Both forms of Taqleed existed in the early days. However, after the development of the four legal schools, the later scholars converge upon a consensus to follow only one of the four school in order to shun the doors of more diverse opinions and possibility of following ones desires. For a layperson to acknowledge and fully appreciate the evidences, he must primarily understand Usul-ul-FIqh (legal principles), the Furoo (subsidiary cases), the procedural framework of inferring laws, the various scholary opinions on that particular subject and the principles of reconciliation between conflicting and contracting evidences. These domains are not accessible to the laymen, hence, he is to resort to the principles and opinions of an expert – a mujathid.

Taqleed and Ittiba

Advocates of the abandonment of Taqleed generally assert that they do Ittiba as opposed to Taqleed. They argue that Ittiba is following an expert with recognition of the evidences as opposed to Taqleed which implies blind following without knowing the evidences. This arguement is futile and baseless because as we indicated previously, Taqleed does not mean to blindly follow anyone. It is merely reliance upon the opinion of an expert jurist with evidence and proof. This system cannot be managed by a person without proper qualifications. In essence Ittiba and Taqleed are the same thing.

Classification of Texts

All proofs and evidences contained in textual sources are not of the same category. Injunctions of the commands and prescriptions vary between each other, depending on their nature. Not every command is clear and simple as working out a basic equation of 2+2

There are two major classifications of evidences;

1) Those textual evidences that are categorical and render no other possible interpretation apart from one. For instance, the fundamentals of belief, obligations (like Salah,Zakah....) and prohibition such as consumption of wine, fornication etc.

 Ijtihad is not required in this category since matters pertaining to this type are clear and categorical, for instance, the command to establish Salah, give Zakat and so on. The connotation of the term Salah is categorical, implying only one single interpretation which is to carry out a specific mode of worship, five times a day. Giving any other interpretation apart from this, would render it invalid and unacceptable.

2) Those textual evidences which are non-categorical. Such texts require extensive research and critical analysis by a specialist in order to arrive to a conclusion which he deems as closer to the truth. This relates to the elaborative discourses of juristic cases. This category allows no scope for other possible interpretations since it involves one exerting every intellectual ability. It is inevitable that the conclusion of one Mujtahid will differ from the other, because not every Mujtahid will differ from each other, because not every Mujtahid employs the same methodology of inference as the other. Differences of opinion in this category are therefore probable and tolerable.

 Below is an overview of non-categorical types of evidences;

 1) Ambiguity in words.

 2) Words having multiple meanings with the impossibility of applying all of them simultaneously.

 3) Amr (imperative) and Nahi (prohibition) have various connotations. For instance, imperative commands (amr) could imply obligation, recommendation, concession and so on. The

Mujtahid needs to determine the nature of that imperative command by analysing the context in which it is mentioned.

4) Two conflicting Hadeeth which require the mujtahid to restort to the principles of resolving conflicting proofs.

5) No clear ruling of a legal matter is found in the textual sources, so the Mujtahid exerts all effort in searching for a precedented ruling from the textual sources that are similar to the contemporary one. Once he identifies the similarity, he will then transfer the precedented ruling to the contemporary one. However, the deductive method of one Mujtahid may be different from the other, resulting in both of them reaching to a different conclusions.

Example:

1) Imam Shafi and Imam Abu Hanifa had different understandings of the order of Wudhu. Imam Abu Hanifa believed it to be a sunnah to do wudhu in the sequenced order. However, Imam Shafi believed it to be Fardh to do whudhu in a certain order. This is because they had different understandings of the Quran Verse.

2) In relation to the timings of Salah, the Messenger of Allah described the expiry of Maghrib time to be the disappearance of the Shafaq. However, Shafaq implies two meanings; the first meaning implies the disappearance of the redness in the sky snf the second meaning implies the disappearance of the redness and the whitness that follows (when the horizon become completely dark).

 Imam Shafi and others have adopted the first meaning, the disappearance of the redness in the sky. However, Imam Abu Hanifah has preferred the latter meaning, that is, the disappearance of both the redness and the whiteness.

 The subsequent differences that follows from this are from this instance, if a person performs his Isha Salah whilst there is whiteness effect in the horizion would his Salah be valid? According to Imam Shafi his Salah will be valid because Maghrib time has expired. However, Imam Abu Hanifah opines that his Salah will not be valid because Maghrib time has yet not expired.

3) An example of two conflicting evidences, both of which are equally authentic, is the issue of marrying during the state of Ihram. All of

the imams unanimously agree that to consummate during the state of Ihram is prohibited and violates the sanctity of Ihram. However, is it permissible to just have the Nikah performed whilst in the state of Ihram.

Imam Shafi'ee views that it is not permissible to marry whilst in the state of Ihram. This is based upon the Hadeeth reported by Imam Muslim in his Saheeh that the Messenger of Allah said, "A Muhrim should not marry, nor to be married and neither proposed to."

Imam Abu Hanifah views that it is permissible to marry during the state of Ihram. His evidence is the hadith recorder by Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim in their Saheeh, that the Messenger of Allah married Sayyiduna Maimoonah whilst in the state of Ihram and consummated after they both finished Umrah and were out of the state of Ihram.

These three examples illustrate some of the complexities involved when interpreting and inferring rules from the source of the Shariah, despite the evidences being rigorously authentic. There are literally hundreds upon hundreds of examples in the sunnah, in respect to the elaborated discourse of the Islamic Law such as purity, Zakat, fasting, Hajj, marriage, divorce, Islamic finance and so forth, in which the four great Imams have differed. The discussion of each subject area is extensive and exhaustive that requires a life time commitment in attempting to analyse the evidences of the opposing views between the scholars with their juristic principles, Usul-ul-Fiqh (legal principles) and criteria of preferences and thereafter to draw a decisive and cohesive conclusion.

It is in this respect that we choose to adopt Taqleed – adherence to one of the four madhabs. Each legal school compromises of reputable jurists and experts in their own right who have dedicated a significant portion of their life to the field of refining and distilling the Shariah for the subsequent generations of the Ummah. It is the refinement process and systemisation which facilitates the Ummah to practise their deen. So,in essence, the prime objective of every muslim, which is to follow the command of Allah and his Messenger is attained by resorting to one of the four Madhabs.

Taqlid in Hadeeth

1) Sayyiduna Hudhaifah relates that the Messenger of Allah said: “I do not know how long I will remain with you, so follow these two people after me; Abu Bakr and Umar.” (Tirmidhi)

2) The Messenger Of Allah is reported to have said in regards to Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Masood. “ I am pleased with you for what the son of Umm Abd (Abdullah Ibn Masood) is pleased with you.” (Mustadrak)

3) The messenger of Allah sent Sayyiduna Muadh to Yemen as a governor and a teacher. The Messenger of Allah posed certain questions to ascertain his method of judging between people. He began by asking how he would judge if a matter was presented to him. Sayyiduna Muadh replied, “With the book of Allah.” He asked, “What if you don’t find it in the book of Allah?”. He replied, “Then from the sunnah.” He asked, “What if you don’t find it in the Sunnah?” He responded, “Then I will apply Ijtihad.” The Messenger of Allah patted him on his chest (as a gesture of ratification) and remarked,”Praise be to Allah who has enabled the messenger (Muadh) of the messenger of Allah, for that which Allah is pleased with.”

 (Abu Dawood)

In the first hadith, the messenger of Allah instructed the companions to follow Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar in matters pertaining to the deen. Following them is tantamount to following the messenger of Allah in all religious affairs. Both of these esteemed individuals were Khaleefahs and possessed the competency of Ijtihad and are reported to have solved many judicial matters during their time. The fact that they were in a position of issuing legal verdicts and the masses followed their legal opinion, evidently suggest the importance of resorting to experts in matters relating to legal opinions.

Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Masood was sent as a teacher for the people of Kufa in Iraq during the reign of Hadhrat Umar and Sayyiduna Muadh was sent to Yemen during the time of the Messenger of Allah as a governor and teacher. When both were sent to their respective provinces to teach people, the community entrusted their religious affairs to them and exclusively relied upon their legal verdict. Both companions

were possessors of immense knowledge in their own right. The prophet (PBUH) reffered to Hadhrat Muadh Ibn Jabal as the possessor of the knowledge of Halal and Haram and about Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Masood, bequeathed to his companions to accept whatever he says to be true.

To illustrate this point further, Aswad Ibn Yazeed relates, “Muadh Ibn Jabal was sent to us as a teacher and a governor to Yemen. We enquired from him about a man who has passed away and left behind his daughter and his sister (the manner in which the wealth will be distributed between them). He gave half (of the estate) to the daughter and the remaining half to the sister.” (Bukhari)

Regarding Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Masood, Imam Bukhari records an incident in his Saheeh that once some people approached Sayyiduna Abu Musa Al- Ashari enquiring about an issue related to inheritance. He answered their query but referred them to Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Masood (to seek confirmation of his answer). When Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Masood responded to their query, they discovered that his response was different from the answer of Sayyiduna Abu Musa. They reapproached Sayyiduna Abu Musa to inform him of his fellow Companion’s answer. Upon hearing Sayyiduna Abdullah’s answer, he remarked, “Do not ask me anything as long as this great scholar (Abdullah Ibn Masood) is present amongst you.”

The preceding evidences make it clear that the practise of adhering to the Fatwa of an expert and relying on their expertise, without the need of demanding evidence has existed since the first generation of Muslims. This approach is in actual fact similar to Taqleed Shaksi.

4) The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, “Verily the cure for Ignorance is to question.” (Abu Dawood).

 The wording of the above hadith suggest to every common reader that the most appropriate and correct approach to seeking knowledge and dispel ignorance is to question, but questions must be posed to those who are considered experts in their respected fields. Neither passing a judgement without prior investigation of the matter, nor consulting those in postions of authority is a grave sin. The messenger of Allah

(PBUH) would reprimand and disapprove those passing judgement without sound knowledge or without consulting the people of knowledge. This is clearly demonstrated from the background incident that occurred which caused the Holy Prophet to make the above statement.

Sayiduna Jabir relates, “We went on a journey and one of the comrades amongst us was struck with a rock that injured his head (severely). He had a wet dream (which required him to perform Fardh Ghusl). However, due to excruating pain of the wound he was unable to perform ghusl. He consulted some companions to seek for the dispensation of Tayammum (dry ablution). They replied, “We are unable to find any dispensation for you because you are able to use water.” The companion thus performed ghusl and died (as a result of this). When we came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and informed him of this account, he remarked (as though he was angry), “They killed him, may Allah destroy them! Why did they not ask if they did not know? Verily, the cure for ignorance is to question. It would have sufficed hi if he had done a dry ablution and kept his wound bandaged.” (Baihaqi)

Despite the fact that the Companions issued a ruling based on their understanding, the Messenger of Allah held them responsible for the tragic death of their comrade because of not consulting the matter before hand and failing to understand the matter properly. The notion of “Do it yourself” or ‘seek your answer from the Quran and Sunnah’ is refuted by this single incident. If this attitude will not lead to misapplications of the divine laws then what will it not do?

The existence of Taqleed Shakshi during the era of the Sahaba

1) Ikrimah relates that (during the season of Hajj) a group of people from Madeenah enquired from Ibn Abaas, the ruling regarding a woman who starts to menstruate during the first Tawaf (prior to the final tawaf). He said that she is permitted to go home without completing the final Tawaf. The people of Madeenah remarked, “We shall not prefer your opinion over the opinion of Zaid Ibn Thabit.” (Bukhari). In another narration recorded in the Musnad of Abu Dawood Tayalisi, reported from Qatadah (a Tabiee Scholar), the words used

were, “We will not follow you, O Ibn Abbas as you go against the opinion of Zaid.”

The above is a clear illustration of strict adherence to the opinion of a reputable jurist whilst leaving the opinion of another equally reputable jurist.
At this point, it can be shown that the companions of the prophet followed a reputable source and ruling. This is apparent from Ibn Qayyim’s statement: “It is said that Ibn Umar and a group of those who lived after him in Madinah amongst the companions of the Messenger of Allah’s statements.” (I’lamul Mooqi’een volume 1, Page 17)

This is the practise of Taqleed Shakshi, so if this was the case during that era, reffered to as the golden era of Islam, then how important is it for the Muslims today to adhere to one of the 4 accredited schools.

2) Amr ibn Maimoon Al- Awdai, a tabiee, relates, “Muadh Ibn Jabal came to us in Yemen as a messenger of the Messenger of Allah. I heard his takbeer during Fajr and noticed the deepness of his voice. I began developing a keen interest towards him so i remained in his company and did not leave him until I buried him in Syria. I then began searching for the most knowledgeable person after him and thus, came to discover Abdullah Ibn Masood (to be the most knowledgeable). So I remained in his company until he died.” (Abu Dawood)

Intriguingly, in spite that there were many prominent Companions existing, the narrator relates his strong attachment to a certain individual companion for gaininf Islamic knowledge and relying on their Islamic scholarship. Any student of deen choosing to seek knowledge from an individual teacher, like in this case, would give preference to his teacher’s view and interpretation of the sacred Islamic laws over theres, due to his prolonged attachment with that

teacher. In the similar manner, a Muqallid (follower) adheres to a particular school of thought and their methodological framework of interpretation of the juristic laws. He thus, prefers their qualified scholarship over others.

Evolvement Period of Taqleed

The practise of Taqleed-Shaksi can be retrospectively be traced back to the era of the Sahabah and the Tabieen. In actual fact, this was the path of the Salaf (pious predeccesors). This goes to show the salaf did taqleed.

After the demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the companions advance beyond the Arabian Peninsula and conquered the territories of the Persian and Roman Empires. Within a period of thirty years, the Muslims conquered the region of Sham (Levant), Egypt, Iraq, Iran, North Africa and the Persian Gulf as well as other surrounding provinces, all of which became part of the extended Islamic empire. Consequently, a significant number of the Sahabah dispersed throughout the conquered lands and took residency there whilst many chose to remain in Makkah and Madinah. Many of them took positions of authority and governed certain regions for instance, Sayyiduna Amr Ibn As governed the entire Egypt. Sayyiduna Muawiyah governed the entire Sham and so on. In addition to political administration, many also assumed roles of teachers and imparted Islamic Knowledge to the local citizens. Subsequently, they became legal consultants as well as political leaders for those local people.

Allah does not burden a soul more than it can bear so why should laypeople have the burden of interpreting Hadith and Quran themselves? As well as this, the Sahaba did taqleed and it is in the Quran that ‘if you believe like how they believed, you shall surely be guided’ and the Hadith of Rasulullah (PBUH) that ‘my companions are like stars, whichever one of them you shall follow you shall surely be guided.”

Through the companions acquired their knowledge directly under the tutelage of the Messenger of Allah, they differed amongst themselves in

the detailed aspects of Islamic Law, especially in those instances where no clear textual evidences were to be found.

Example: The quran states that a woman who becomes widowed whilst not being pregnant must observe a waiting period of four months and ten days instantly after the demise of her husband. However, the Holy Quran also recalls in another place that the waiting peiod of a pregnant woman is until she delivers her child, irrespective of the duration period that remains for her delivery.

So in a hypothetical situation, if a woman's husband dies whilst she s carrying a child then which of the above two waiting periods must she observe; four months and ten days or until delivering the child? Sayyiduna Ali viewed that she will observe the two periods in order to incorporate both commands. Hence, if pregnancy is the longest of the two periods then she must observe the waiting period of pregnancy. If not then four months and ten days. However, Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Abbas viewed that the verse of pregnancy is a generic command applying to all instances, thus if she is pregnant, her period will expire the moment she gives birth irrespective of whether she delivers the child in less than four months and ten days, after her husband's death.

This is an example of two profound and knowledgeable companions differing in regards to a Quranic injunction. This reflects on their different level of understanding and interpreting the Islamic law based on sound reasoning. Other reasons of differences amongst the Companions include, identification of the illat (effective course), acceptance of hadith, application of hadeeth whereby one companion applied it in one instance whilst another companion applied it elsewhere, whether a command is abrogated or not and also, different location. Each of the above reasons require an extensive discussion which is beyond the scope of our discussion.

Another example of differences amongst the companions is the distribution of the conquered lands in Iraq and Syria, whether they should be distributed amongst the Muslim soldiers as spoils of war or remain in the possession of their respective owners. This required extensive Ijtihad and critical analysis in searching for a precedented example from the Quran and Sunnah. The Quran only instructs one-fifth

of the spoils of war to be allotted for the poor and destiture, but has remained silent about the distribution of the remaining four parts.This issue led to two groups:

The first group viewed that they should be included as part of the spoils of war, thus the Muslim soldiers should receive a share of those lands. Amongst those who opined this position were Sayyiduna Abdur Rahman Ibn Auf and Sayyiduna Bilal. Their supporting evidence was that in the fourth year after migration, the Messenger of Allah distributed the lands belonging to the Banu Nadheer (a jewish tribe living initially residing in Medinah) after evicting them from Madinah because of their treason. After assigning one fifth of the share for charity, according to the Quran (8:41), the Messenger of Allah distributed the remaining four parts between the Muslim soldiers. Two years later after this incident, the land of Khaybar was conquered in which the Messenger of Allah distributed some parts of the lands between the Muslim soldiers.

On the other hand, the second group which included Sayyiduna Umar, Sayyiduna Uthman and Sayyiduna Muadh Ibn Jabal opined that those lands should remain in the possession of the land owners and not be distributed as part of the spoils of war. Their supporting evidence was that in the eighth century after migration, the Muslims conquered Makkah, but without any major confrontation or encountering with the enemy. The messenger of Allah (PBUH) did not distribute their lands amongst the Muslim soldiers and allowed those lands to be retained by their owners. Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) allowed some portion of the land in Khaybar to remain in the hands of their owners after its conquest. This suggests that it is not mandatory for the leaders to dispense the remaining four parts amongst the soldiers. If he wants, he may allow the landowners to retain the land.

From the foregoing example, both groups of Companions referred to the same Quranic Verse regarding the spoils of war but reached to two different conclusions. Each group interpreted it in accordance to their observation and understanding from the practise of the messenger of Allah (PBUH).

This discussion illustrates that the companions of great scholarship exercised Ijtihad in new cases by resorting to the Quran and Sunnah in

search for similitude examples. Consquently, this lead them to differ amongst themselves in legal matters since each Companion concludes with a ruling based on his personal investigation, interpretation and analysis. Such differences, paved the foundation for Ijtihadic differences in non-textual and unclear matters in the subsequent generations.

By the end of the second era, two interpretive schools were ingrained; the first being the school of hadith in Madinah and Makkah pioneered by Companions such as Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Umar, Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah and others and the second one being the school of Ijtihad which reigned in Kufa, pioneered by Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Masood, Sayyiduna Ali and other companions who took residency in Iraq.

In contrast to Madinah and Makkah, the companions living in Iraq encountered innumerable complex issues which they had never ever faced before, such as the example above, requiring them to excercise extensive Ijtihad. These complex issues included new cultures, influx conversion of non-Arabs into Islam, emergence of deviant sects and fabricators of Hadeeth and much more. Madinah and Makkah, on the other hand, were secured from such complicated matters because most of them were already solved during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah and Sayyiduna Abu Bakr. Access to Hadeeth was much easier in Makkah and Madeenah and its transmitter required less scrutiny because of the widespread religiousness of people in these two vicinities.

As a result, the residence of these two regions relied heavily on the literal meaning of the Hadith and accepted Hadith from whoever related it to them. This is not to suggest that the Companions in Makkah and Madinah never employed Ijtihad, however in contrast to Kufa, their employment of Ijtihad was very rare. After the era of the companions, Iraq produced scholars of profound knowledge of Hadith and Fiqh such as Alqamah (the student of Abdulllah Ibn Masud), Ibraheem an-Nakha’i, Hammad Ibn Abi Suleiman, Qadhi Shuraih (a judge appointed by Hadhrat Umar). These are just a few names of the elite personalities produced in Iraq. Their teachings and interpretation of the legal matters in religion served as the foundation of legal thought for the residents of Iraq,which was then collated and systemised by Imam Abu Hanifa and his students. The same thing was done in Medinah by Imam Malik and

his student Imam Shafi. Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal also acted upon this. These group of scholars were part of the Tabieen (succesors of the Sahaba). They propagated the knowledge they acquired from the Sahabah. The companions differing in the detailed aspects of the Islamic Law inevitably led the successors to differ as well, which brought about many schools of opinion.

Initially, there were many schools of thought operating in other regions such as the Madhab Of Abu Layth in northern Iraq, Imam Awzaii in Syria, Imam Hasan al-Basri in Basra (Iraq) and many more. However, they did not enjoy the same privilege as that of the four major schools of thought did. Over the passage of time, the students of each of the four Imams began developing and transmitting their Ijtihadic principles to the subsequent generations. The subsequent students initiated the compilation of literalitures dealing with detailed juristic cases, relating to matters pertaining to every facet of human life, which encompassed the laws of purity, devotional matters, commercial finance, marriage, divorce, penal laws, inheritance and so on. Their legal theories were codified and served as an interpretive model for the Shariah sources.

The Period of Codification and the scholars adherence to one of the Four Imams

The leading pioneers of each of of the four schools are:

1. Imam Abu Haneefah (b.80-d.150 AH)
2. Imam Malik Ibn Anas (b.93-d.179AH)
3. Imam Muhammad Ibn Idrees Ash-Shafiee (b150-d.204AH)
4. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (b.164-d.241 AH)

It is important to understand that the laws and rulings of each school of thought aren’t based upon one person’s individual opinion and perspective rather it is based upon a panel of elite scholars. It is said that Imam Abu Hanifa used to have a panel of around 80 scholars scrutinise and analyse each and every maslah (ruling). As well as this, some of Imam Abu Hanifa’s students such as Imam Shaybani disagreed with him over certain rulings but the reality of the matter was that the Madhab was based upon Quran

and Sunnah and not the Imam's personal opinion. This is a common misconception amongst the salafis.

The period between the third and fourth century of the Islamic calendar marked the perfect movement of subsequent scholars to further develop, refine and preserve the juristic works by codifying and composing books of commentaries. The scholars eventually adopted their methodological framework and disseminated that legal framework and jurisprudence throughout the region they resided in. Many of the existing schools were gradually replaced by one of the four schools. Hence, the adherents to the Awzaii school of thought in Syria for instance, struggled to resolve new cases they borrowed laws from the newly developed Shafiee school. Similarly, adherents to the Basri school in Basra borrowed laws from the Hanafi School in Kufa to resolve newly emerging cases. In this way, the other schools ceased to exist and were replaced.

Scholars of great calibre in the subsequent generation attached themselves to one of the four schools and contributed to the preservation and expansion of their respected school. Each school compromised of hundreds and thousands of adherent scholars, each one being a grammar, Arabic linguistic and rhetoric or tasawuf. If a non muqallid (one who does not do taqleed) chooses to discard the credibility of the four schools by abandoning the adherence of one of them, under the pretext of strictly following the Quran and Sunnah. Then in my response to this, it could be argued that history has produced many calibre of scholars with great academic credentials who adhered to one of the four legal schools.

Some of the unquestionable scholars who practised Taqleed:

1. Imam Abu Easa At Tirmidhi (Shafii) was a Muhaddith.
2. Imam Yahya Ibn Maeen (Hanafi) was a Muhaddith.

3. Imam Bayhaqi (Shafii) was a Muhaddith
4. Imam Abu Jaafar At-Tahawi (Hanafi) – a muhaddith and a faqeeh.
5. Imam Fakhr ud-Deen Ar Razi (Shafii) – a Muffasir.
6. Imam Ibn Abdul-Barr (Maliki) – a Muhaddith.
7. Imam Abu Zakariyya An-Nawawi (Shafii) – a Muhadith and a faqeeh.
8. Imam Abu Bakr Jassas (Hanafi) – a faqeeh and a mufasir.
9. Imam Ibn Rajab (Hanbali) – a faqeeh
10. Imam Ibn-ul-Hummam (Hanafi) – a faqeeh.
11. Imam Abu Ishaq Ash-Shatibi (Maliki) – a faqeeh.
12. Imam Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani (Shafii) – a Muhadith.
13. Imam Abdul-Abaas Al Qurtubi (Maliki) – a Mufasir.
14. Imam Badr-ud-Deen Al-Ayni (Hanafi) – a Muhadith.
15. Imam Jalal ud-Deen As-Suyuti (Shafii) – a Muffasir, Muhaddith and a master in almost every field.
16. Imam Ibn Rushd (Maliki) – a faqeeh.
17. Imam Adh-Dhahabi (Shafii) – A muhadith and an authority in Asma-ur-Rijal (critical analysis of the narrators in the chain of transmission).
18. Imam Ibn Qudamah (Hanbali) – a faqeeh.
19. Imam Abu Hamd Al Ghazali (Shafii) – a Saint, Faqeeh and Theologian.
20. Ibn Abideen Ash Shami (Hanafi) – a faqeeh.
21. Ibn Katheer (Shafii) – a mufassir and a muakhir (historian).

Evil desire is one of the most influential and momentous force that constantly provokes and lures man into sin. In a lengthy Hadeeth recorded in Sunan of Ibn Majah, the Messenger of Allah prophesised that the following of desires would prevail and that every self-opinioned man will be obsessed with his own opinion. This obviously refers to that person who without any sound knowledge and proper qualification voices his own opinion on certain issues (related to Islam) and then becomes obsessed by it. In other reports, the prophet (PBUH) prophesised the emergence of a group who will

issue verdicts without sound knowledge. As a result, they will be misguided and end up misguiding others.

The egos and desires of a man is a powerful instrument which the devil uses to his advantage to destroy mankind. This can manifest in many forms, amongst of which is being selective in ones own deen by picking and choosing whatever he deems favourable. If a layperson is presented with conflicting evidences and opposing views of the scholars without acknowledging the evidences of both sides nor understanding the principles behind of preferring the strongest of the two conflicting evidences, he will inevitably succumb to his desires by selecting the most favourable position under the pretext of following the Quran and Sunnah.

The process in evaluating and processing hadith to be authentic or not is a meticulous process which is almost unfeasible to be undertaken within the 21st century due to the chain of transmitters increasing by the day. Furthermore, Mujtahid Scholars have differed in respect to accepting or rejecting a hadeeth since the criteria of one Mujtahid may differ from the others. So, will a non-Muqalid be able to choose the most correct position on this matter?

If he proposes the arguement that he will follow the opinion of such and such a scholar then is that not Taqleed in essence? Would he question the credibility of the scholar and his way of interpreting the Hadith or his method of inference?

Another resort the non- Muqallid may choose is to be selective in his approach by taking the easiest of the options on the premise that all four Imams are correct. He will follow the Hanafi position in the intactness of Wudhu when touching a female and also the Shafii position in the intactness of the Wudhu with the flowing of blood. Conversely, if he performs Salah in this manner, then his Wudhu and Salah are considered invalid according to both Imams. Though he may argue his

case of following the Hadith or that all four Imams are correct, his standpoint on this matter has been dictated by his desires.

The final option available for him is to adhere to a particular Madhab that compromises of erudite scholars, specialised in various sciences and to follow their interpretive model and juristic principles which have been tried, tested and approved by scholars throughout centuries. In this way, his ego is controlled and will also follow Quran and Sunnah in a systematic and coherent manner.

The scholars of the past therefore issued a consensus for the general masses not equipped with the tools of Ijtihad to follow one of the four major schools of thought to prevent the deen from being misrepresented or employed to suite ones personal desires and satisfaction. Imam Shihab ud Deen An-Nafrawi (a maliki scholar) reports a consensus of all scholars that Taqleed Shakshi – following one of the four schools, is necessary; *"The consensus of the Muslims has been established upon the Wujub (obligation) of following one of the four imams today; Abu hanifah, Malik, Shafi and Ahmad, (may Allah be pleased with them). What we have explained before, in terms of the obligatory of following one of the four Imams, is in relation to those who do not possess the capability of performing Ijtihad."* (Al-Fawakih Ad-Dawani, Volume 2 Page 574)

The Hanbali scholar, Imam Ala ud-Deen Al Mardawi cites the statement of the famous scholar Imam Al Wazeer Ibn Hubaira: "Consensus has been established upon Taqleed of one of the four schools and that the truth does not lie outside of them." (Al-Insaf, Volume 11 p.169)

The four remaining schools of thought are the only surviving schools with the proper tools and correct instruments needed in order to understand the Quran and Sunnah. Muslims living in the west are responsible for representing and propagating Islam in its purest form. This is only achievable if one follows the teachings of the pious predecessors and appreciates their methodological framework. We can decipher that the first three eras are the greatest amongst the Ummah of the prophet as we are provided with this information through authentic hadith. In order to be the best you have to emulate the best. The 'salafis' claim to do this but it is evident that the creed of the true Muslim is

based upon following the Quran and Sunnah which is only correctly accessible and attainable through a Madhab.

Had there not been a consensus upon adhering to one of the four schools, there would have been hundreds of Madhabs by now. This would have then, opened a floodgate of more Madhabs and diversity within the Ummah. The Muslim community will thus have failed to present Islam in a coherent and pure manner. Following one of the four schools is what united the people together in the past. Irrespective of the differences of opinions that existed between them in jurisprudential matters, they were considered as valid differences.

> The messenger of Allah (PBUH) himself ratified differences amongst the sahabah if the intention was to uphold the commands of Allah and his Messenger (PBUH) in its purest form. To give an example of this, once the Messenger of Allah commanded his companions to go to Banu Quraidah. Asr time was coming in and the companions disputed whether they should pray straight away or pray once they reached their destination. This incident has been discussed prior in the book. The sahabas ended up splitting into two groups and they both had differences of opinion. Neither of the two groups were reprimanded by the Prophet of Allah due to having valid points made by each group.

Each of the four Imams has an unbroken chain stretching back to the Prophet (PBUH). Although the four legal schools differed in legal issues, each one strove with sincere efforts in propagating what they believed was closest to the truth.

We can learn that following one of the four schools is necessary and to discard them is nothing but opening the doors of more diverse opinions, more confusion and discord amongst the Ummah

Statement of scholars on the necessity of Taqlid

Below are some of the statements given by distinguishing scholars explaining the necessity of Taqlid, for a person who has not reached the level of Ijtihad. In spite of this, astonishingly, the salafis have started to oppose the salaf in this matter. They condemn its persistency and some have gone as far as rejecting its consensus amongst the scholars. This is nothing but due to shear ignorance and lack of understanding. Whenever, they are in need of a fatwa they often research it on the internet. Despite not even being able to read the Quran with decent Tajweed, they believe their own opinion to be sufficient.

The far-sighted scholars of the **Ahl al-Sunna** (those people who follow the teachings of the prophet **PBUH**) long ago understood how valuable these four schools were in safeguarding the Deen of Allah Almighty. So they issued a fatwa (legal verdict) that it was **necessary** for every Muslim to learn and adhere to one of the four schools.

An incident regarding a very noble scholar is a predicament we can all learn from. Allamah Suyooti claimed Ijtihad within the 5th century. Allamah Shihab ibn hajar al haitami (974 AH) says: “When Imam Jalal Udeen Suyooti claimed Ijtihad, all his contemporaries confronted him. They presented a questionarie to him about some issues. Therein, they stated two possible answers to each question, and said: “If you have even reached the lowest degree of Ijtihad, which is Ijtihad in fatwa, then you should stipulate the preferred view, substantiated with proof, in conformance with the maxims laid down by the Mujtahideen. However, he returned their questionnaire without nay answer, excusing himself that he was too busy, and as was therefore unable to look into these questions.”

The Verdict Of The Ulama Of The Muslim World

1) The famous Imam al-Haramayn Abu al-Maʿāli Abd al-Malik bin Yusuf al-Juwayni (419-478 AH) writes in his book Al-Burhan:“The expert scholars have agreed that the masses are obligated (ʿalayhim) with following the schools of the (four) Imams who thoroughly investigated and researched, who compiled the chapters (of Fiqh) and mentioned the circumstances of the rulings.” (vol. 2, P. 1146)

2) Shaikh al-Islam Ahmad Ibn Hajr al-Haytami writes in Tuhfa al-Muhtaj fi Sharh al- Minhaj:“The claim the layman has no madh-hab is rejected, rather it is necessary (yalzamuhu) for him to do taqlīd of a recognised school. (As for the claim: scholars did not obligate following one school), that was before the codification of the schools and their establishment.” (Vol.12 p.491-Kitab al-Zakah)

3) Imam al-Nawawi writes in Al-Majmu‘ Sharh Al-Muhadhdhab:“The second view is it is obligatory (yalzamuhu) for him to follow one particular school, and that was the definitive position according to Imam Abul-Hassan (the father of Imam al-Haramayn Al-Juwayni). And this applies to everyone who has not reached the rank of ijtihād of the jurists and scholars of other disciplines. The reasoning for this ruling is that if it was permitted to follow any school one wished it would lead to hand-picking the dispensations of the schools, following one’s desires. He would be choosing between Halal and Haram, and obligatory and permissible. Ultimately that would lead to relinquishing oneself from the burden of responsibility. This is not the same as during the first generations, for the schools that were sufficient in terms of their rulings for newer issues, were neither codified nor widespread. Thus on this basis it is obligatory for a person to strive in choosing a madh-hab which alone he follows.” (vol.1 p. 93)

4) Shaikh Salih al-Sunusi writes in Fath al-‘Alee al-Malik fil-Fatwa ‘ala madh-hab al-Imam Malik:“As for the scholar who has not reached the level of ijtihād and the non-scholar, they must do taqlīd of the Mujtahid… And the most correct view is that it is obligatory (wajib) to adhere to a particular school from the four schools…” (p.40-41, in Usul al-Fiqh)

5) Imam Sharani, an undisputed authority in the Shafi school writes in Al-Mizan al-Kubra:“…You (O student) have no excuse left for not doing taqlīd of any madh-hab you wish from the schools of the four Imams, for they are all paths to Heaven…” (p.55 vol.1)

6) Imām Shams al-Din Dhahabī (673-748 AH) writes in Siyar A‘lam al-Nubalā under Ibn Hazm Zāhirī’s comment:“I follow the truth and perform ijtihād, and I do not adhere to any madh-hab”, “I say: yes. Whoever has reached the level of ijtihād and a number of imāms have attested to this regarding him, it is not allowed for him to do taqlīd, just as it is not seeming at all for the beginner layman jurist who has committed the Qur’ān to memory or a great deal of it to

perform ijtihād. How is he going to perform ijtihād? What will he say? On what will he base his opinions? How can he fly when his wings have not yet grown?" (Vol.18, Pg.191)

7) In the famous twelve volume Maliki compendium of fatāwā, Al-Mi'yar al-Mu'rib an fatāwā ahl al-Ifriqiyya wa al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib, Imam Ahmad al-Wanshirisi records the Fatwa on taqlīd: "It is not permitted (lā yajoozu) for the follower of a scholar to choose the most pleasing to him of the schools and one that agrees the most with him. It is his duty to do taqlīd of the Imam whose school he believes to be right in comparison to the other schools." (vol.11 p.163-164)

8) The Hanbali scholar Imam 'Ala al-Din al-Mardawi in his major Juristic compendium Al-Insaf, cites the statement of the famous scholar Imam Al-Wazir ibn Hubaira (died 560 ah):"Consensus has been established upon taqlīd of every one of the Four Schools and that the truth does not lie outside of them." (Vol.11 p.169, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah).

9) Imam Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi states in Al-Bahr al-Muhit,"There has been established a consensus amongst the Muslims that the truth is restricted to these (four) schools. This being the case it is not permitted to act upon an opinion from other than them. Nor is it permitted for ijtihād to occur except within them (i.e. employing their principles that is the tools of interpretation)." (vol.6 p.209)

10) In the commentary of the Shafi text Jam' al-Jawami', Imam Al-Jalāl Shams al-Din al-Mahalli writes:"And the soundest position (wal-Asahh) is that it is obligatory (yajibu) for the non-scholar/layman and other than him of those (scholars) who have not reached the rank of ijtihād, adherence of one particular school from the madh-habs of the Mujtahid Imams (iltizam madh-hab Muayyan min madāhib al-Mujtahideen) that he believes to be preferable to another school or equal to it." (Kitab al-ijtihād, p.93)

11) [11] Imam Rajab al-Hanbali writes in his book: "Refutation of anyone who follows other than the four schools" [A title that emphatically exposes the deception of the Salafi claim that it is they who represent true Islam]:"…that is the Mujtahid, assuming his existence, his duty

(Farduhu) is to follow what becomes apparent to him of the Truth. As for the non-Mujtahid his duty is taqlīd." Elsewhere having indicated in the latter the rarity of the lofty status of ijtihād, he states: "As for all other people who have not reached this level (of ijtihād), it is not allowed (lā yasau'hu) for them but to do taqlīd of these Four Imams and to submit to that which the rest of the Ummah submitted to." (Majmoo' al-Rasail Ibn Rajab, vol.2 p. 626 and p.624 respectively).

12) In the famous commentary of the treatise of Imam Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani Al-Risalah, entitled "Al-Fawākih al-Dawāni," Imam Ahmad al-Nafrawi (died 1126 ah) also confirms the Ijma of all the scholars that following one Imam is obligatory: "The consensus of the Muslims has been established upon the obligation (Wujub) of following one of the four Imams today; Abu Ḥanīfa, Malik, Shafi and Ahmad- May Allah be pleased with them… What we explained before, in terms of the obligation of following one of the four Imams, is in relation to those who do not possess the capability of performing ijtihād." (vol.2 p.574, Bab Fi al-Ruyah wa al-Tathāub, 1997).

It is also important to understand and contemplate over the fact that each and every madhab has a strong respect towards one another. For instance, all madhabs are of the opinion that they are right with the chance of being wrong and the madhabs which they are not corresponding with are wrong with the chance of being right.

Hadith and Fiqh

One of the most common posed arguements against the concept of Taqlid is that if there is Saheeh (authentic) Hadith, then what reason is there to follow a Madhab? They often argue that one attains more close ness to the Sunnah by resorting directly to authentic hadith as opposed to following a Madhab because Hadith is infallible as opposed to the Imams who are fallible.

A careful analysis of the above arguements suggests that people have no true understanding of the science of the Hadith and the methodological framework of the scholars of the past. As a result of this they tend to view Islam as a plain black and white; that everything is clear, therefore, therefore Islam will be easier just by following Saheeh Hadith. The reality of the matter is, that Islam Law is much more

complex than what they assume it to be. Had Islamic Law been easy and simple then diverse opinions amongst jurists would not have risen in the first place. Let alone the jurists, the sahabah would not have differed. They are compilations of hadith books with deal with differences amongst hadeeth for example: Sharhul Maani Al Athar of Imam Jaafar At-Tahawi.

Scholars have explicitly stated that a Hadith to be rigourously authentic is not only condition for its practise; application and so forth must also be considered. There are many sound Ahadith to be found in the Hadith collections but cannot be acted upon. For instance, there is a hadith which mentions that Wudhu breaks by touching anything that is cooked on fire. Though the Hadith is rigorously authentic, the scholars unanimously agree that this ruling is now abrogated and no longer suitable for practise because of the Hadith in which the prophet (PBUH) once consumed goat meat (cooked on fire) and thereafter performed Salah instantly without going to do Whudhu.

Shaykh Muhammad Al Awammah, a renowned Syrian Muhaddith explains what is meant by acting upon an authentic Hadith is that it must be suitable for practise. In addition to a critical assessment of the chain of transmitters and text, other factors must be taken into consideration such as the inference of laws (abrogation) and so on, as opposed to the popular notion that the soundness of the chain is sufficient for its practise to be necessary, (Atharul Hadeeth fi Ikhtilafil Aimahatil Fuqaha {URDU VERSION} page 98)

In determining the suitability of practise, one must primarily be insightful in the meaning of Hadith which is achievable only by acquiring the knowledge of Fiqh. Fiqh ensures the texts are contextualised and practise properly. Shaykh Al Awammah quotes some of the renowned Muhadithoon and Fuqaha explaining the necessary relationship between Hadeeth and Fiqh. It is said that once a Sahabi visted Kufa and found there to be 4000 Muhadiths and 400 Faqeehs. This goes to show Fiqh is a very meticulous process only suitable for certain people. Fiqh serves as a supplementary guide towards understanding and practising upon hadeeth;

1. Abu Naeem relates from Abdur Rahman Al-Mahdi (titled the leader of the believers in Hadith), “No person is worthy of leadership in Hadith until he is able to distinguish between authentic and non-authentic reports, inferable and non inferable reports and know where the knowledge was acquired from.”
2. Imam Muzani (a renowned Shafiee scholar) states, “May Allah show mercy on you, ponder over the Ahadith which you have collated. If you acquire knowledge from the jurists, then you will be amongst the Fuqaha (Jurists).”
3. Imam Malik said, “Practise upon Hadith the way the Fuqaha have practised on it.”
4. Sufyan Ibn Uyayna states, “Hadeeth can become a means of misguidance for people except for the Fuqaha.”
5. Raja Al-Harawi states, “Whoever learns Hadeeth without Fiqh is like a pharmacist who ammases medicine without knowing which applies to it, until the physician comes. Thus he remains a student of Hadith and does not know the application of the Hadith until a Faqeeh comes.”

All of the above statements imply to the fact that Fiqh plays a vital role for explaining Hadith in terms of its correct application and the manner it ought to be practised. Thus, determining the practise of Hadith to become necessary solely on the basis of the soundness of the the chain of transmitters is inadequate. Another reason why it is insufficient to consider the practising upon a Hadith as mandatory solely based on the soundness its chain is that there are instances where two or more authentic reports conflict with one another. One must be acquainted with the science of conflict resoloution in Hadith, sn independent discipline which only the Fuqaha possess.

For example, should we drink water standing up or sitting down.

1. Sayyiduna Nizal Ibn Sabura once came to the door of Habba and drank whilst standing and he said, “Verily I saw the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) do the way you have seen me do.” (Bukhari)
2. Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Umar relates, “We would eat during the time of the messenger of allah (PBUH) whilst walking and we would drink whilst standing.” (Tirmidhi)

3. Amr Ibn Shuhaib relates from his father (Shuhaib) who relates from his grandfather (Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibnul As) that, “I saw the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) drinking whilst standing and also sitting.” (Tirmidhi)
4. Sayyiduna Anas Ibn Malik relates the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) forbade that a man drinks whilst standing.
 Qatadah (a Tabiee) states that we enquired from Sayyiduna Anas about eating (whether standing up and eating is permissible)? He replied, “That (eating whilst standing) is asharr (far worse) and akhbath (immoral).” {Muslim}.
5. Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah relates that the prophet (PBUH) said, “No one amongst you should drink whilst standing. But whoever forgets, then he should vomit.” {Muslim}.

All of the above Ahadith apparently conflict with one another in spite of the soundness of their chain of transmitters. Hadith 1 and 2 permit drinking water whilst standing. Hadith 3 permits drinking water whilst standing and sitting. However, hadith 4 and 5 prohibit one from drinking water whilst standing. The complexity involved at this stage is whether reconciliation between the conflicting reports is possible or not, and if so then on what basis will it be done? Or whether in such instances the jurist will leave a side an authentic report in favour of another authentic or an external evidence. This is one of the many reasons as to why we shouldn’t inteprete hadith ourselves. In cases like this, one is now compelled to resort to the works of the classical Fuqaha to seek answers. The principle which the Hadith scholars employ to resolve contradictory reports have themselves been established by the four Imams, but differ in their respective method and approach.

When two hadeeth conflict with each other, the matter becomes ambigious and opened to more than one interpretation. It is in these matters that Taqleed of a legal jurist is made and not in following any random person. It is made by following religious experts who are also righteous and pious. The fact that the vast majority of the Ummah in the past adhered to one of the four schools and the statements of some (amongst many) distinguishing scholars about following a particular

school,establishes the need for the ummah to adhere to one of the four schools of thought today.

A final point to mention is the question of infallibility. Undoubtedly, the four Imams are fallible in comparison to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). However,considering their level of scholarship and expertise and the fact that thousands of scholars throughout centuries followed an Imam and adopted their interpretation model of the Shariah, does that not make them infallible in comparison to today's individuals or minority advocates of the abandonment of Taqleed? What guarantee can such advocates give that their method of understanding the Quran and Sunnah and its application is more robust and rigorous compared to the four schools? Such advocates paint a false contrast between the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and the four Imams as there is no comparison to be made in the first place. The actual contrast is made between the adherents and non-adherents of a Madhab.

In this way, one shall find that adhering to one of the four schools makes ones practise of religion easy and much more systematic. Apparent contradictions between reports become resolvable by simply following their respective Imam's principle and legal interpretation. On the other hand, abandoning the four madhabs and then attempting to formulate another legal framework of interpreting the Shariah sources is like re-inventing the wheel, a process that requires decades of commitment and even worse, opens an influx of more schools of thought and diverse opinions.

Following only one school

Another view that is propagated by some is, why not follow all four schools simultaneously by selecting the soundest opinion? This argument is based upon the verse in the Quran – *"Ask the people of remembrance if you don't know." (21:7),* which permits following the scholars in general, hence does not restrict one to follow one Imam. They then argue that if the view of all four scholars are accepted by the majority of the Ummah and it is accepted that all four are on the truth, then why restrict to one Imam only?

Undeniably we regard all four schools to be on the truth, based on their research methodology of inferring rulings from the Shariah sources.

However, if a layman under this pretext, begins selecting views randomly from here and here, then the question posed on to him is, on what basis has he chosen to act upon the view of this particular Imam in this matter only? He has not reached to the status of Ijtihad nor is he equipped with the science of Hadith. Far from being an authority in Hadith, he is ignorant of the principles of the grading system in Hadith. It thus follows, that being selective between Imams without sound knowledge will ultimately lead towards acting upon whatever conforms to his desires.

Another argument the Salafis use is the statement of Imam Abu Hanifa,

"When a Hadith is authentic then that is my Madhab."

This above statement apparently suggest to prefer Hadith over the statement of the Imams at all times, Hence, if the fatwa of an Imam conflicts with an authentic Hadith then simply cast his fatwa aside and practise upon the apparent meaning of the Hadith.

Nevertheless, two things have already been made clear from our previous discussion; firstly, the one who has attained the status of Ijtihad and is deeply rooted in the science of Hadith can determine whether a Hadith is suitable for practise or not. Secondly, it is not always possible to strictly follow authentic Hadith because at times, there are other authentic Ahadith that will simultaneously contradict it, or the Hadith may not be suitable for practise due to certain reasons.

The above statement has been attributed to Imam Abu Hanifa as well as other Imams also. But unfortunately, it is frequently quoted in a decontextualised manner and reiterated by the non-advocates of Taqlid.

Remember, that when Imam Abu Hanifa issued this statement, he was not addressing the general public or the laypeople. He was specifically addressing the Mujtahids and scholars rooted in the science of Hadith and Fiqh. He was actually attesting to the fact that his research and legal framework was in full conformity with the principles of the Quran and Sunnah. His conclusion and findings were actually based on sound evidences. So by framing his statement in another way, it is as though he is stating, “In my Madhab, you shall find authentic Hadith.” It also implies that if a Hadith is later discovered and fulfils the criteria for its soundness and practise according to me, then include that as part of my Madhab also.

Allamah Ibn Abidin Ash-Shami, after quoting the above statement of Imam Abu Hanifas’s comments, said, “It is no hidden matter that this (expression) is directed at those who are qualified to analyse the texts and recognise the applicable laws from the abrogated ones. When the scholar of the Madhab analyses the evidence and acts upon it, it will be correct to attribute that (practise) to the Madhab due to the permission granted by the Imam.” (Raddul-Muhtar, Volume 1 Page 67)

Imam Shafi also made the same statement that (when a Hadeeth is authentic then that is my madhab).

Ibn Katheer said regarding this that “It is a sign of his mastery and trustworthiness, which was also the way of his brother Imams, may Allah have mercy on them and be pleased with them. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Volume 1 Page 654)

Imam Nawawi (a renowned Shafii scholar) further adds the condition of researching the Madhab of the school before preffering Hadith over the statement of the Imam. He mentions, “What Imam Shafi said does not mean that anyone who finds a Hadith should say, “This is my Madhab of Imam Shafi, applying the apparent of his statement. What he said most certainly applies to those ranked to the status of Ijtihad in the Madhab. It is a condition for the person to be firmly convinced that either Imam

Shafii (or any other Imam in this respect) was unaware of the existence of the Hadith or its authenticity. This is only possible after having researched all the books of Imam Shafii and other similar books of his companions who took knowledge from him and others similar to them." (Al Majmu Sharh al-Muahadhab Volume 1 Page 64)

If an Imam doesn't act upon a hadith, it doesn't necessarily mean the hadith didn't reach him. Rather it is possible that the hadith was not sound according to him – it was abrogated, restricted to a particular instance or it was muqayyad (qualified).

This can be illustrated with two examples:

1) Imam Awzaii once approached Imam Abu Hanifa during Hajj objecting as to why he discarded the practise of Raful Yadain (raising the hands before and after Ruku)? Imam Awzaii narrated the hadith of Raful Yadain with his own chain of transmission. Imam Sahib then narrated his hadeeth of the non practising of Raful Yadain, not only with his own chain of transmission but also established his chain to be more superior than Imam Awzai's chain of transmission. (ila us Sunan Volume 3 Page 75)

2) Imam Abu Yusuf (a prominent student of Imam Abu Hanifa) as well as a Mujtahid in his own right, states, "I have not seen anyone with insightful knowledge of the meaning of Hadith and its application in jurisprudence than Imam Abu Hanifa." He further adds, "Whenever I opposed him and then contemplated over the matter, I would see his position which he adopted to be the most redeeming position in the Hereafter. Whenever I was inclined towards Hadeeth, he would have a deeper insight with authenticity of Hadith than me."

To determine a Hadith to be suitable for practise is part of the process of Ijtihad, which requires thorough background research and critical analysis of the textual report as well as the transmitters in the chain. A scholar will strive to act upon what he deems closer to the truth. Each scholar will determine the status of a Hadith based on his own criteria, resulting in differences of opinion in the suitability of a hadeeth; one might consider a hadith to be suitable for practise whilst another may not.

To give an example of differences in criteria, Imam Abu Hanifa only accepted if the narrator of a Hadith transmitted that Hadith in the exact verbatism way he heard it from his teacher. He is not permitted to make any additions to the wordings of the Hadith. His argument was that making additions to the original text of the hadith will inevitably alter the meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), hence preservation of the original text will not be fulfilled. Other scholars permitted to make minor additions of wordings to the original texts but only under strict conditions. He did not allow paraphrasing.

Another example of differences in criteria is that according to Imam Bukhari, it is a condition for the person narrating a Hadith from his teacher to have remained in his company even momentarily. If he transmits a hadith without remaining in his company then his narration will not be accepted. On the other hand, according to Imam Muslim, his narration is still accepted even if he did not remain in the company of his teacher as long as he lived and heard it directly from the one transmitting it to him.

In summary, Imam Abu Hanifa's statement as well as the similar statements made by the other Imams, are addressed to the Mujtahid scholars, not to the laypersons. Determining a Hadith to be authentic and its applicability can only be done by a person with profound understanding of the science of the grading system in Hadith and Fiqh. It is only the Mujtahid of the school who decides when to prefer Hadeeth over the statement of the Imam.

The Prophet (PBUH) said "Hadith is dangerous without a scholar."

> The Prophet of Allah (PBUH) exclaimed "... Until, when no Alim is left, the people will take ignorant men for teachers. These will be questioned and they will reply without knowledge. They are themselves misguided and misguide others." {Bukhari}

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi has written about the spreading and circulation of hadith and about Madinah being the headquarters of knowledge. He writes, "These four Imams are such that their knowledge collectively encompassed the whole world and those imams are Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik,Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad.

A person should follow the Imam he believes to be the most knowledgeable and pious. The lives of the imams will be discussed in this book also.

Although the muslim jurists who have undertaken the excerise of ijtihad have been great in number, the schools of the four imams are found to be more comprehensive, well-arranged and more organised to this day. The muslim ummah as a whole have regarded these four imams as having the most reliable interpretations of Shariah. The four schools are known to have covered all aspects of shariah and a persons obliogation to follow the shariah is fulfilled once he adheres to a school of thought.

This is the true picture of the term Taqleed with reference to the jurisprudential schools.

Difference types of Hadith

- Those statements that were made verbally – hadith-e-qawli
- Those statements that were practically demonstrated – hadith-e-feili
- Certains actions done infront of the prophet that weren't rejected or reprimanded. This is called 'taqreer'.

Qiyas (analogical deduction/ theological rhetoric)

Qiyas is the application of Illat (legal cause) also reffered to as a pretext or prime factor, that is found in the Holy Quran, Sunnah or Ijma (consensus) to a modern day contemporary issue. This is essentially required when the ruling of a particular contemporary issue is not clearly understood, nor is it found categorically in the Quran,Sunnah or Ijma. Thus, as a last resort, Qiyas will be used in order to determine the ruling of a contemporary matter, by carefully analysing which prime factor from the Quran, Sunnah or Ijma is similar to the current issue. The difference between Ijtihad and Qiyaas is that Ijtihaad means to create a new ruling using Quran,Sunnah Ijma and your own analogical deduction. Whereas Qiyaas is to base a deduction, due to a certain circumstance, upon the principles of the madhab in order to give a ruling. It is said that 'Qiyaas manifests Shariah, it does not entact new laws." Ijtihad is

> Qiyaas in a huge upscaled form but qiyaas is not ijtihad by any means. This is why a mufti bases his ruling through the procedure of Qiyaas and not Ijtihad.

There were certain questions that the Holy prophet was asked. He would reply to them and to further facilitate the questioner's understanding he would sometimes give a logical reason by posing a logical question to the questioner knowing that the answer would become apparent to the questioner.

Example: A sahabi once inquired that since Hajj was due upon his mother (who had passed away), would it be sufficient if he was to perform it on her behalf? The holy prophet (PBUH) replied in the affirmative. Then he posed a (logical) question to the questioner: Suppose if your mother took a loan from somebody andyou paid it off (on her behalf), would it be acceptable or not? The sahabi replied that it would be acceptable. The holy prophet (PBUH) then said that, paying off the loan to Allah is more worthy to be accepted. (Bukhari)

In the Shariah this is known as Qiyas, Ijtihad, Istinbat and Itibar. Teachings of this nature are supported by the Holy prophet. Its conditions and details can be found in the books of Usul (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence).

In Islam there is no scope to 'pick and choose'. This is why Sayyiduna Muadh was sent as a judge so that the Masail and rulings he derived from the Quran, Hadith and Ijtihad would be implemented. Following the three principles mentioned by Sayyiduna Muadh Ibn Jabal would be indeed following the prophet (PBUH).

It has been narrated from Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah that the Holy Prophet said, "Whoever obeyed me has indeed obeyed Allah and whoever disobeyed me has indeed disobeyed Allah, whoever obeyed the Ameer (leader) has indeed obeyed me and whoever disobeyed the Ameer has indeed disobeyed me." (Bukhari)

Allah says in the Holy Quran, "Do not pursue what you have no knowledge about." (17:36). It is quite clear that not everbody can do ijtihad and it is impossible for anyone to do Ijtihad Mutlaq (develop a new

madhab) nowadays due to the pressures of society and other corresponding factors. The following verse in the Holy Quran makes this point clear; Allah says, “If they had reffered it to the Messenger and to those who have authority amongst them, the proper investigators would have know it from them direct.” (4:83) If a Mujtahid is correct in his investigation he will receive double reward; nevertheless if he is incorrect he will still receive a single reward.

A doubt may arise as to why Taqleed is restricted to only four imams (Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik , Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad) only, despite there being many Mujtahidoon throughout history. The reason for doing Taqleed of the four imams in particular, is not because they are thought to be greater than everybody else. Rather, when doing Taqleed, it is important to acknowledge the rulings in which Taqleed is done. There are three fundamental conditions for doing Taqleed for a particular Imam:

1) That their entire Fiqh and Madhab are preserved from the chapter of purity to inheritance. This is essential so that a person or a scholar can refer to this Imam at all times regarding any aspect of life.
2) The science of deriving laws and Usuls (jurisprudential principles) has also been preserved, in order for a contemporary scholar to derive new laws on contemporary issues that emerge, based upon the Usuls set by the Imam, that are extracted from the Holy Quran and Sunnah.
3) The imam has left behind students and scholars to propagate his Fiqh.

They have all collected vast amounts of details and explanations for the rulings which have been compiled and collated in the madhabs. From the chapter of taharah to inheritance, including worship,dealings,divorce etc. In short, huge numbers of Masail (rulings) in all fields and spheres have been collected and are available. If a person was to do taqleed, who would he choose other than these 4 imams.

Allah bestowed upon them in-depth knowledge of the Holy Quran and Hadith and comprehensive skills of deducing laws. They were amongst the greatest of people. Salafis like to disregard everything about them to sustain their own agenda.

Many people question an Alim over a ruling and if they aerent satisfied with the ruling being in their favour they would walk off to another Alim in search of ease. It is apparent that this cannot be the motive for the search of truth. Allah says in the Quran – “And do not follow your personal desires, for they will lead you astray from the path of Allah.” (38:26)

“And follow the path of him who turns to me.” (31:15)

Moreover, it is also well known that the profound scholars of the six prominent Hadith collections ie. Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Tirmidhi etc. Also practiced Taqleed. For example, Imam Abu Dawood was a Hanbali and according to some a Shafiee whilst Imam Muslim, Imam Nasai, Imam Tirmidhi and Imam Ibn Majah all followed the Shafiee school of thought.

Other prominent scholars in the past who adhered to a madhab

1. From amongst the Hanafi School of Thought:

a) Imam Yaqub Ibn Ibrahim, famously known as Imam Abu Yusuf, a renowned Faqih, a scholar of Hadith and a senior student of Imam Abu Hanifah. Demise 182 AH.

b) Imam Muhammad Ibn Hasan Ash-Shaybani also a renowned Faqih and a senior student of Imam Abu Hanifah. Demise 189 AH.

c) Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Al-Muthannah who was from the progeny of Sayyiduna Anas Ibn Malik. He was a Qadhi (judge) and amongst the teachers of Imam Bukhari, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others. Demise 215 AH.

d) Imam Ahmed Ibn Muhammad Abu Jafaar At-Tahawi. An authority in the field of Hadith and a Faqih. He is the author of Aqeedatul-

Tahawiyyah (which is the aqeedah of Ahlus-sunnah wal Jammat). Demise 321 AH.

e) Mahmood Ibn Ahmad Al Badr Al-Ainee famously known as Allamah Ainee – a muhaddith, and the author of a voluminous commentary of Saheeh Al Bukhari called Umdatul Qari. Demise 855 AH.

f) Ali Ibn Sultan Muhammad Al Qari Al-Harawi, famouslu known as Mulla Ali Qari, a great Muhaddith and the author of Mirqatul Mafatih which is a famous commentary on Miskatul Masabih. Demise 1014 AH

2. <u>From amongst the Maliki School of Thought</u>

a) Muhammad Ibn Abdus-Salam, Ibn Suhnun, Abu Abdullah Al Qairawani, a very high ranking scholar of Hadith. Demise 265 AH.

b) Hafiz Ibn Abdul Barr, a great scholar of Ahadith. Demise 463 AH.

c) Ismaeel Ibn Ishaq Abu Ishaq, Al Qadhi Al-Judhami. Demise 282 AH.

d) Aslam Ibn Abdul Azeez Ibn Hisham, expert in Hadith and Chief Justice of Andalusia. Demise 282 AH.

3. <u>From amongst the Shafiee School of Thought:</u>

a) Abu Bakr, Ahmad Ibnul Husain famously known as Imam Baihaqi, author of the voluminous Sunan Al-Baihaqi. Demise 458 AH

b) Abdullah Ibn Muhammad known as Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Shaibah, a famous teacher of Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Abu Dawood and Imam Ibn Majah. Demise 235 AH.

c) Ahmad Ibn Ali, known as Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, the author of Fathul Bari – a famous commentary of Saheeh-Al-Bukhari. Demise 852 AH.

d) Ismaeel Ibn Umar Imad-ud-Deen famously known as Ibn Kathir, an authority in the field of Tafseer, Hadith and Islamic History. He is the author of Tafsir Ibn Kathir (commentary of the Holy Quran), Al Bidaya Wan Nihaya (a voluminous collection of Islamic History) and many more. Demise 774 AH.

e) Muhi-ud-Deen Abu Zakariyya, Yahya Ibn Sharaf An-Nawawi famously known as Imam Nawawi, a profound scholar in Hadith and a famous commentator of Sahih Muslim. Demise 676 AH.

f) Imam Tabarani, the author of Tabarani. Demise 360 AH.

4. Followers of the Hanbali School of Thought

a) Ahmad Ibn Abdul Haleem, also known as Ibn Taymiyyah, an expert in Hadith. Demise 728 AH.

b) Hafiz Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, an expert in various fields and an author of many books. Demise 751 AH.

c) Abdur Rahman Ibn Ahmad, known as Ibn Rajab, one of the commentators of Saheeh Al-Bukhari and also Sunan-Tirmidhi. Demise 795 AH.

d) Ahmad Ibn Jaafar, a teacher of many famous Muhaddithoon such as Darul Qutni and others. Also one of the narrators of Musnad Ahmad. Demise 368 AH.

The above mentioned eminent scholars are just a few; there are countless scholars to this day to adhere to one of the Madhabs. As we have cited above, it is apparent that it would not be an exaggeration if it was said that these Ulama reached such a status only through following the Holy prophet (PBUH) and doing Taqleed of the four Imams.

Shaykh Sarfaraz Sahib states, “O readers! This is an ocean that has no shore. Take a look into the books of biographies, the books on the categories of Muhadithoon, the Fuqaha, the Muakhiroon (historians), the Mufasiroon (commentators of the Quran) and the grammarians and observe. You will certainly find that at least 98% of all of them were followers of an Imam.”

Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thanvi states:
“If a person was to select all of the strictest rules from all the Madhahib, then he will be outing himself into unnecessary difficulty which is wrong. On the other hand, if someone was to select all the easy rulings from all the Madhahib, then this becomes personal interest which is also destructive. Hence, to adhere to one Imam will be systematic and free from self-interest. All of the madhabs in their jurisitic verdicts and opinions are neither too strict, too lenient but very moderate. (Ashraful Jawab Page 161)

Imam Tawoos relates that he met seventy from amongst the Sahabah who would resort to the opinion of Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Abbas whenever they differed in a matter. (Fawaid-fil-Uloomil-Fiqh)

Our discussion by now has made it clear that Taqlid isn’t a new phenomenon. Its existence has been since the early Muslim generations. Taqleed is about relying and following experts in Islamic Law, namely legal jurists or mujtahids. The process of Taqleed underwent some serious evolvement from Am (general) to Shakshi (individual school). Taqleed of one of the four Madhabs became necessary due to the following reasons;

a) None of the other madhabs gained recognition and acceptance in the same way as the four major madhabs did.

b) The robustness of the four major madhabs enabled them to solve unprecedented legal issues in every generation.

c) Their juristic principles, detailed cases and elaboration of legal texts were codified,refined and developed by their reputable students and by the end of the fourth era, only their principles served as an accepted interpretive model for the Shariah.

d) Many reputable scholars of the past adhered to one of the four legal schools, each one being an expert in his own right.

e) A layperson, being oblivious of the science of Hadith and juristic principles, is unable to distinguish between suitable and non suitable practises of Hadith.

f) Following one of the four Madhabs will be a means of controlling ones ego and desires. The deen will become much more systematic and easier to follow.

g) Abandoning the four legal schools will result in creating a fifth Madhab and opening a floodgate of more diverse opinions and confusion on single matters.

Nowadays, you can see majority of people who claim to be “practising” offering their own legal verdict by giving their ignorant opinion on a certain matter or judgement. This is a scary predicament as predicted by the Hadith:

Abdullah Ibn Amr narrated that the prophet (PBUH) said:

“Allah will not snatch away knowledge abruptly from people, but rather he will snatch knowledge by removing scholars. This will happen to the extent that when no scholar remains, people will take ignorant leaders as their guides. These leaders will be asked and they will give opinions (fatwas) without knowledge. So they will be misguided and they will misguide.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

This Hadith clearly states that giving religious and legal opinions (fatwas) is the occupation of a scholar. People enquire concerning religious and legal issues and act according to the answers received. This is the gist of Taqleed. The prophet foretold that there would come a time when scholars will become extinct and ignorant people will issue fatwas. In this scenario, where there are no living scholars to refer to and hence there will remain none to extract rulings from the Quran and Sunnah directly, what other process will there be for people to follow the Quran and Sunnah except to rely upon the decisions of previous scholars. This Hadith informs us that as long as the Mujtahids remain, reference should be directed to them alone and when no scholar remains, instead of resorting to the incompetent and unqualified for soloutions, Taqleed should be made of previous scholars.

It is narrated in Abu Dawood that Hadhrat Ali said that “If the deen was based upon opinions, then the lower surface of the khuff would be more befitting for masah than the upper surface, but I saw the prophet (PBUH) making masah on the upper surface.”

A similar statement has been reported by Imam Abu Hanifa. Once Imam Abu Hanifa visited Imam Baqir who said: “You oppose the hadith of my grandfather on the basis of opinion.”

Observing the greatest of respects, Imam Abu Hanifa replied: “I seek refuge in Allah, who can oppose hadith?” The following discussion then took place:

Imam Abu Hanifa:Who is weaker of man and woman?

Imam Baqir: Woman

Imam Abu Hanifa: In inheritance, whose share is greater – man or womans?

Imam Baqir: A man’s share

Imam Abu Hanifa: If I had to decide on the basis of opinion, I would have said that women being the weaker should have a greater share. This is the conclusion of opinion.

Imam Abu Hanifa: Which is more noble – Salah or Fasting?

Imam Baqir: Salah

Imam Abu Hanifah: In view of superiority, Qadha of Salah should be obligatory on the woman in the state of menses. But her Salah is waived. She does not have to offer Qadha but has to do Qadha of fasting.

These answers overwhelmed Imam Baqir with such pleasure and happiness that he kissed Imam Abu Hanifa's forehead.

In this connection, Hadhrat Maulana Thanwi narrated an incident. Once a claimant of Ijtihad met Hadhrat Thanwi who posed the following question:

"Two people are on a journey. One is in need of ghusl of janabat and the other is in need of whudhu. Water is not available hence both resort to tayammum. The junub made tayamuum for the purpose of ghusl and the other person for wudhu. Who of the two is more suited for Imamate (leading the prayer)?

The claimant of Ijtihad immediately said that the one who made tayammum for whudhu is more suitable because his hadth [state of impurity] is of a lesser degree. Hadhrat Thanvi replied:

'This is your ijtihad. Now listen to the Ijtihad of the noble fuqaha. They say that the one who made tayammum for ghusl is more suitable for imamate because tayammum is complete and perfect form of purification (taharate kamila). Hence, the one who made tayyamum of ghusl is equivalent to rank to the one who made ghusl. The one who made tayammum of whudhu is like the one who made whudhu. And one who made ghusl is more suitable for imamate then the one who made whudhu. Therefore your opinion is invalid."

This is one of the examples as to why Ijtihad cannot be practised properly today.

It is narrated by Abu Hurairah that the prophet (PBUH) said:

"Whoever gives a fatwa (legal opinion) without knowledge, the sin will be on the one who gives the fatwa." (Abu Dawood)

This Hadith is also very clear about the validity of Taqleed. If Taqleed was not permissible, then just as there is sin for offering an opinion without knowledge and investigation, there should be an equal amount of burden on the person asking if he did not preserve to reach his own conclusions, but the Hadith states that the burden is on the one giving the fatwa and not on the one asking. It indicates that the responsibility of a person who is not a scholar is to ask someone who has knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah. If that knowledgeable person gives him an erroneous fatwa, the burden of sin is on the mufti and not on the questioner.

Ibrahim Ibn Abdur Rahman narrated that the prophet (PBUH) said:

> “Reliable people from each succeeding generation will carry this knowledge. They (the reliable people) will refute the distortions of those who exaggerate and the erroneous explanations of the ignorant.” (Bahiqi in Madkhal)

This Hadith condemns the erroneuous explanations of the ignorant and makes it very clear that the refutation of these explanations is the responsibility of the scholars. Again, this shows that those who do not possess the acumen of a Mujtahid should not venture into explaining the Quran and Sunnah according to their own understanding. Rather they should refer to the scholars in order to understand the correct meanings of the Quran and Sunnah a person needs to be extraordinarily qualified. Rudimentary knowledge of the Arabic language does not qualify one as a Mujtahid and hence such explanations by a non-proffesional would be regarded as spurious.

The scholars of Islam have always reffered to Quran, Sunnah, Ijma (consensus) and then finally to Qiyaas (legal analogy). These have been practised for hundreds and hundreds of years. Sometimes the consensus would refer to the actions of the sahaba in order to derive a ruling. Ibn Qayyim states that the Fatwa of more than 130 companions have been recorded and memorised. These fatwas include proof that is offered from quran and sunnah and others where it is not.”

> Shah Waliyullah writes: “The criticism against Taqleed does not apply to the person who acknowledges that he should follow only the prophets statement, that is to say what prophet made halal and haram since the person does not possess the knowledge enumerated by the prophet and is not capable of reconciling apparent contradictions, nor does he have a structured method of extracting rules from those statements, he should follow a righteous scholar assuming that he is right in his opinion, provided that the scholar follows the Quran and Sunnah and gives fatwas based on them. However, if the assumption of the follower is found to be wrong, he must withdraw from following that scholar immediately without any question or debates. How can anyone doubt this line of thinking since the practise of asking for fatwas and giving fatwas has been vogue from the time of the prophet. There is no difference if he asks the scholar whom he follows all the time or whether he asks him sometimes (as in following a particular scholar) and others on other occasions (or practising Taqleed in general) as long as the scholar meets the criteria which we have mentioned.”
>
> May Allah have mercy upon the scholars who saw that there was a need to demonstrate Taqlid. For reasons of administration and to avoid the possibility if contradictions amongst the scholars of differing Ijtihad over a primary source, the laity were encouraged to follow only one Imam and Mujtahid instead of reffering to several. This idea gained hegemony during the third and fourth century AH. Hence, this has been the dictum of the vast majority of the Ummah for subsequent centuries, and scholars themselves have conformed to Taqleed of a particular Imam . In order to understand the reasons and benefits of the systemisation of Fiqh, the following premise has to be comprehended: following ones desires and passions is a very grave form of misguidance.

Imam Nawawi has explained the necessity of following a particular school in the following words.

“ The reasoning for this is that if following any school of thought was allowed, it would lead to people hand-picking the conveniences of the schools in order to follow their desires. They would choose between halal and haram and between necessary and permissible. This would lead to relinquishing the burden of responsibility, this was unlike in the early days of Islam where the schools of thought were not readily available, nor were they structured or known. So based on this reasoning, a person should strive to choose one school of thought which he follows precisely.”

Since the era of the companions, until now there have been thousands of scholars and mujtahids who have had very diverse and disparate opinions and concessions concerning different issues. There will always be concessions in one school of thought, which are not found in another, regardless of the fact that these where great jurists, they were not immune from errors. In fact, every Mujtahid has one or two opinions, which go against the whole Muslim Ummah’s position (Jumhoor). Following any and every imam will lead to “relinquishing the collar of responsibility”. To further elaborate on this issue we can provide a detailed illustration which will leave you dumbfounded of the negative effects of not following a Mujtahid Imam.

For example: Imam Shafiee allowed chess; Imam Abdullah Ibn Jafar apparently allowed singing with musical instruments; Imam Qasim Ibn Muhammad allowed pictures which did not have any shadows; Imam A’amush held the opinion that fasting started with sunrise and not at dawn. Imam Atta Ibn Rabah held the opinion that if eid fell on a Friday, then the Jumuah Salah and Zuhr Salah would not have to be read and there would be no prayer until Asr. Imam Dawood Tai and Imam Ibn Hazm both believed that a person could see his potential fiancée in the nude and Imam Ibn Sahnoon has supposedly allowed anal intercourse. Thus, if an individual was to follow every one of these opinions – would his iman still be intact.

This is the reason why Ma’mar writes: “If a man took the opinion of the people of Medinah regarding music and anal intercourse; the opinion of the people of Makkah regarding Mutah (temporary marriage) and barter and the opinion of the opinion of the people of Kufa regarding intoxicating drinks, he would be the worst of Allah’s servants.”

Shaykh Abdur Rauof Manawi had discussed this issue at length and has quoted SHaykh Ibn Hamam:

"*It is most probable that these types of restrictions are placed to prevent people groping for convenicences."*

SHaykh Abu Ishaaq Shatibi, the great Maliki Jurist has outlined the reasons for not allowing people to search for conveniences by following different schools in his famous work Al-Muwafiqaat.

Shaykh Ibn Khaldoun explained why Taqlid prevailed: "The Taqlid of four Imams became popular throughout muslim cities and the Taqleeed of other scholars was forsaken. The doors of diverse opinions were closed because so many academic terms were being used to denote so many different concepts and because it had become so difficult to reach the stage of a Mujtahid. There was the apprehension that the title of a Mujtahid be attributed to one who was not worthy, or someone who is inauthentic (and cannot be trusted) in his opinion and in his religious practise. Scholars declared that attaining the stage of a Mujtahid was not possible and restricted people to follow a particular Imam. They prevented people from following Imams alrernately as this was tantamount to playing (with Islam)."

Shah Waliyullah states: "If there is an ignorant person within india or central Asia where there are no expert scholars on Shafi,Maliki or Hanbali law, and if there are neither any books of those schools readily available, then this person must follow the school of Imam Abu Hanifa. It would not be permissible for him to leave the school because he would effectivelt be exonerating himself from the duties of Islam. He would be an archanist. This would not be the case for a person who lived in the two sanctified mosques (makkah and Medina) where scholars of the three other schools are readily available."

A very clear example of this can be found during the caliphate of Uthman regarding the compilation of the Quraan. All seven dialects were readily available and were widely recited. Uthman requested that all copies of the Quran be standardised upon the dialect of the Quraish whose Arabic was uncontaminated over successive generations. Uthman abrogated the remaining six dialects and retained the dialect of the Quraysh. All other copies of the Quraan were discarded. This was

done because he perceived greater benefit to the Muslim community. Hafiz Ibn Jarir at Tabari (a famous commentator of the Quran) has written – “The community was instructed to memorise the Quran and recite it. They were given the choice to recite it in any of the seven different dialects they chose to do so. For whatever reason, the community was ordered to maintain one standard dialect and to discard the remaining six.” This was mandatory upon them to restrict to a certain method and abrogate the remaining. This is the same methodology provided by a school of thought.

For example, cupping whilst fasting does not invalidate the fast according to the four schools of thought. If a layperson asks a mufti if cupping breaks the fast and for whatever reason he replies in the affirmative, then the burden of the lay person eating and drinking for the remainder of the day will fall upon the Mufti and not on the lay person. Firstly, the Mufti is the one responsible for issuing fatwas. Secondly, he did not pursue the opinions of the four schools. Therefore he is incorrect. Imam Abu Yusuf explained regarding this predicament that the lay person must follow the jurist and scholar since he is not able to reach a correct conclusion by reading the Hadith.

It is important to understand that the Madhabs are not based upon one persons opinion rather a whole panel of renowned scholars. For example, Imam Abu Hanifa is of the opinion that drinking a small amount of wine is permsible for strength. However, no other scholar within the hanafi madhab support this view therefore it is discarded. The reason we follow him as a mujtahid Imam is because he was the founder and leader of the Madhab. The second type of Mujtahid scholar are those Mujtahids within a school of thought. For example – Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad. They are considered hanafi scholars despite differing in the subsidiary issues within a madhab. This is permissible for them as they had reached the level of Ijtihad and in order for a layperson to do that would be extremely difficult. However, in order to do ijtihad mutlaq (form a new madhab) would be impossible.

Some people claim to be muhamadi and not hanafi. This is an ignorant view as following an Imam is actually following the prophet (PBUH) as they have provided the tools of understanding Quran and Sunnah.

We are ambassadors of Islam in this country and must present Islam in the most coherent and purest way possible, avoiding extremism and confusion. It would be a terrible travesty if we became ameans ofshowing those around usthatIslamis confusing, contradictory and divided. Would this be our contribution for Islam, for the profound gift of guidance that Allah so Mercifully bestowed upon us? But the path of non-madh-habism (not adhering to these four great schools) leads to this inevitably. Not only is it transmitting to nonand-new Muslims a version ofIslam that, as has been demonstrated through the preceding scholarly quotes, was practically unheard of, it is sowing the seeds of deep divisions and conflicts. For centuries the Muslims were united together within four schools. The superficial declare this to be disunity, so they call to unity by going back to the original sources of the Qur'an and Sunna. Leaving aside the absurdity of this statement as it suggest the four Imams were somehow basing their opinions on some other mysterious sources, it grossly neglects the fact that differences in understanding, hence differences in opinions on detailed rulings, not only have always existed, but are not to be assumed as fundamentally wrong. To abolish the four schools would open the flood gates to the community getting flooded with dozens of opinions emerging on one single issue.

Omar sent a letter to a Qadhi (Judge) Shuraiah which formed the basis of Ijtihad for scholars such as Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad.

"Shuraih reported that Omar wrote to him and said: "If you are in dispute or in a case where a rule from the Quran is evident, then judge accordingly. If there is nothing in the Quraan, then look into the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and judge accordingly. If there is nothing in Sunnah, then see what the scholars have agreed upon and judge accordingly. And if there is nothing in the above mentioned sourves, then you have a choice. You may either exert or exercise your own opinion and enforce it, or you may reserve judgement. I believe that reserving your opinion can be nothing except good for you."

You can see from this example that Shuraih was a Mujtahid.

In reality, even opponents of Taqleed engage in a form of following, after all even they were not born Mujtahids. Many opponents are not scholars in any sense of the word and even those who are scholars do not have the academic command over every issue. Antagonists of Taqleed - who are non-scholars – will follow the answers offered by the scholars. Hence, there are several compilations of Fatwas where no immediate commitment is made to present proof and even where there exists some dialogue on proofs, how can a layperson determine right from wrong? Thus even the opponents of Taqleed end up being Muqallids (followers). As for those who are scholars, they remain under the obligation to examine all the resources on the Quran and Sunnah before reaching a decision in an issue. In reality, however, not even scholars examine each issue a new rather they are too obliged to resort to the books of Fiqh of the early scholars. The only difference is that instead of reading books from the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi or Hanbali schools of thought – they prefer to refer to Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, Ibn Hazm and Qadhi Shaukani – they are too ignorant to realise that even Ibn Taymiyyah followed a Madhab. The truth is that following the opinion of the experts is part and parcel of every day life. If we were to condemn this very normal and mundane activity, life would become virtually impossible.

Imam Abu Yusuf said “The lay person must follow the jurists since he is not capable of understanding the Hadith independently.”

There were approximately 124,000 companions of the prophet and only 130 issued fatwas. This goes to show that not every single person can do ijtihad and qiyaas. Rather it is the job of the certain few. As well as this, there were only 8 major mujtahids at the time of the sahaba. Every one else was a muqallid.

Today the whole Muslim world is in a frenxy of this kind of permissiveness and so called modernisation. In the name of Ijtihad and freethinking the edifice of classical Muslim scholarship is being dismantled. Academic institutions have been erected to bolster absurd interpretations legalising impressible acts to be permissible. Denouncing Taqleed has been highlighted as one of the many means of achieving the profane goal of following ones whims and fancies. Ironically, in the effort to denounce the works of the classical scholars, these reformers have inadvertently confirmed the foresight of the very same scholars

who had issued the Fatwa centuries ago. They had become the very proof of unbridled pursuit ofn of one's caprices and passions. As long as the Taqleed of an individual was the norm in Muslim communities, thes ideas were not given any attention. Vulnerability to unfounded propaganda and pseudo-intellectual claims of scholarship in the contemporary era has given rise to the acceptance of taqleed of an individual is forbidden in islam. The state of affairs today is that established principles of Islam and issues which are conclusively forbidden by the Quran and Sunnah have been targeted and treated with scepticism and even scorn.

Arguments have been advanced that Taqleed of an individual impedes solutions to modern developments. The answer to such contention is that modern issues, which demand Ijtihad, should be delegated to an expert scholar – whose Taqlid is different from that of a layperson. Such an expert scholar would be able to sift the principles of earlier Mujtahids and resolve new problems based on the same. Moreover, scholars of one school may unite upon soloutions to new problems, which arise. They can do this by using the same principles as their school of thought. This is the reason why, in the Hanafi school, scholars have resorted to following the opinion of Imam Malik in issues like accepting wages and salaries for teaching the Quraan, making legal provisions for divorce for a wife whose husband is lost or impotent. This is different to Talfeeq. Under no conditions is the practise of Talfeeq permissible, which is to use the Fatwa offered by one imam and following another Imam in the same unit of Ibaadah. This is classed as picking and choosing between fatwas which suit your own needs.

It is important to note that the Imams never classed actions within salah to be impermissible. Neither did they class them to invalidate the salah. Rather, they showed their perspective with evidence and proof in favour of the preferred opinion. For example, Imam Abu Hanifa says that it is not necessary to say Ameen out loud whereas some other Imams differ- however Imam Abu Hanifa never claimed that it invalidated the Salah. Rather, he showed proof in order to display the fact that it was later abrogated. This goes to show that every single imam is correct in their own opinion.

Rejecting the Sunnah by claiming that Imam Shafi did not rule in reference to this is an example of fanatical adherence to ones Madhab and it is neccesaey to condemn this type of action to a type of lethargic Taqleed.

Assuming ones Imam is the only correct opinion and the other Imams are false and invalid is an erroneous viewpoint. The correct view is that my madhab's view on a certain ruling is correct with a chance of being incorrect and the other views are possibly incorrect with a chance of being correct. Judgement is only fulfilled by a Mujtahid and they all excercised their respected skills to reach conclusions. In the event that certain opinions sre incorrect - the Mujtahids will still be rewarded for extertion as stated in the famous hadith. Many of the differences between the Imams are merely based on which is the more preferred action. Differences concerning what is halal and haram are issues for scholarly circles only, opening such frictions to the populance, where there exists the anxiety of frictioin and commotion, is not the intent of the Mujtahids who differed with each other.

The Mujtahidoon from amongst the Sahaba were: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdullah Ibn Masood, Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Muaadh Ibn Jabal and a few others.

It is said in the Holy Quraan:

"And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread." (Surah Baqarah 2/127)

Hadhrat Adi Bin Hatim At-Tai tried to apply his own intellect in understanding the intended meaning of this verse and hence reached an erroneous conclusion. Subsequently, he expressed what he understood before Rasulullah (PBUH). Rasulullah (PBUH) corrected him and explained the correct meaning of this verse.

This incident is reported by Imam Ahmad bin Hambal:

Imam Shabi reports that Hadhrat Adi bin Hatim related to me that when the above verse of the Quran was revealed, I took two pieces of thread (one thread was black and the other white). I then placed them both beneath my pillow. I stared at the threads for a long time expecting to see the white thread becoming more clear and visible from the black

thread so that I may then abstain from eating. However, the entire night passed and in the morning I came to Nabi and I had expressed what I had understood from the verse adn what I had done during the night. Nabi smiled and remarked: “If the meaning of the verse is as you have understood, then your pillow is indeed very wide. For indeed the white and black threads implied in the verse refer to the brightness of the day and the darkness of the night.”

This goes to show that a laypersons’ explanation may result in him suffering and being misguided

Systemising the laws of Shariah required discerning and differentiating between the previous abrogated laws and the latter laws which replaced them, deciphering between the authentic and unauthentic narrations, categorising the status of injuctions and prohibitions (fardh, waajib, sunnah, mustahab, mubaah, haraam, makrooh-tahrimi, makrooh-e-tanzihi and khilaf-e-awlaa) and finally formulating principles in the light of Quran and Hadith which govern the deduction of non-textual situations. All of the above needed to be accomplished in order to correctly practise upon each law of Shariah in the manner it was revealed by Allah.

Thus, the four mazhahib received the acceptance of thousands if specialists. All these doctors of their field unanimously attested to the umatched mastery of the four imams and admitted their inability to produce a masterpiece mazhab like that of these imams. These Ulama further supported and corroborated the four mazaahib, that all are firmly based on the Quran and Sunnah. It is said that Imam Abu Hanifa had only 3 links in his chain of narration from the Prophet (PBUH).

Currently, the doors of Ijtihad have not been closed, however, after the third century no one has met the criteria of being a Mujtahid. Those people who claimed to be on the pedestal of Ijtihaad were tested by the Ulama of the time and after being proven academically incompetent, were disqualified and rejected.

Allamah Abdur Rahman bin Muhammad Al-Maghribi (808 AH) writes “....Taqleed became confined to these 4 imams in all the cities of the Muslim world. All the followers of other Imams gradually became extinct. Thus, when the terminologies of the various sciences became wide-

spread in the earth, the scholars closed the doors of differences (and confined Taqleed to one of the four Imaams) as they feared that someone unworthy would begin claiming Ijtihad. Hence the scholars stated “The ability to reach the rank of a mujtahid has become virtually impossible.” Thereupon they directed the people towards Taqleed of one of the four imams and warned them against changing madhabs for convenience, as this will amount to playing fools with the deen of Allah. Thus anyone who claims to have acquired the level of Ijtihad in this day and age will be rejected and will not be followed. The entire Muslim world now has a consensus regarding the Taqleed of these four Imams.”

It is very unfortunate that one of the worst signs of the day of judgement approaching is “A person will be satisfied and pleased with his independent reasoning and understanding, and this is among the worst signs. (Mishkaat Page 434).

As well as this, “You will witness people fulfilling their greed, following their base desires, giving preference to dunya over deen and being satisfied with their own reasoning and understanding.” (Mishkaat Page 437)

Nabi (PBUH) has also mentioned that from amongst the signs of Qiyaamah is: The latter part of this Ummah will curse the former (Mishkaat Page 470)

Ibn ‘Uyyana, may Allah be pleased with him, has said, “The hadiths are a source of error except for the jurists.”

Many Salafi modernists independently view the laws of Quran and Sunnah with their limited analogy. They begin to deduce underlying factors (ilal) upon which rulings are based. Thereafter they will abrogate many laws of deen on the basis that the underlying cause that they deduced no more exists. They abrogate necessary laws.

For instance, consider the law of performing whudhu before every Salah.

> In this day and age, a group of modernists hold the view that there is no need to perform whudhu before every salah, since our limbs are mostly covered and do not get dirty. They contend that the law of Whudhu was most relevant to the Sahaba. Many of the Sahaba were shepherds or worked on the fields and in other outdoor

occupations. As a result, their bodies becamed soiled in dust and dirt. Therefore, they were required to make wudhu for every salah. Hence, this group of modernists subjected the law of whudu to their flawed analogy.

A similar example is that of the law of appointing witnesses at the time of Nikah. Rasulullah has declared: " *There is no Nikah without witnesses." (Bayhaqi 7/111)*

Based on this and another Hadith, the scholars have unanimously stated that the Nikah must be witnessed by at least two people, otherwise it will not be valid.

Yet, some modernists opine that the Nikah is valid regardless of whether witnesses are present or not. They comment upon the aforementioned Hadith that witnesses were only deemed necessary in the Hadith in order to alleviate any misunderstanding or denial if that nowadays the Nikaah is properly recorded and signed by both parties. Therefore, witnesses are not necessary. Thus, on the basis of their flawed deduction of the reason for having witnesses in a nikaah, they cast aside this fundamental Shariah requirement.

Another problem of not doing Taqleed is that people will come across certain Hadith which have been unanimously abrogated (according to the consensus of the Sahabah and the entire Ummah), however due to the lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the historical background of the law, they will begin practising upon it. Consider the Hadith which permits the practise of Mutah. Undoubtedly, for a limited time the Sahabah were allowed to practise Mutah in the noble era of Rasulullah during Jihaad. However, this permissibility was later abrogated by the law of prohibition. If anyone independently studies the classical works of the Muhaditoon via Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim as well as other hadith they will come across the permissibility of these actions despite them being abrogated.

In one hadith – Nabi has stated:

"Whoever adopts an independent path will also be alone in Jahannam". (mustadarak hakim 1/115)

Recently several incidents have occurred were three talaqs were issued all at once. The predicament occurs wherein a person issues his wife with three talaqs in one sitting. Upon realising his error he wished to make up. However, the Ulama explained to him that his Nikah with his wife had terminated. Hence, until the Shariah condition of halalah does not happen, it is completely prohibited for him to continue living with this woman. The man was also informed that if they continued living together, they would be living a life of zina. This person went round (in an earnest endeavour to save himself from them the disgrace and embarrassment from society) asking whether any madhab offers a solution to the present situation. He was repeatedly informed that there is consensus amongst all the four madhabs as well as the entire ummah from the time of the Sahabah upon this issue. This consensus continued for seven centuries till the time of Ibn Taymiyyah, who was responsible for breaking the consensus. This person, desperate to save his marriage and extricate himself from embarrassment said, “I will accept this verdict and go by it.”

One who follows this view will be opposing the quran,sunnah,ijma and the sahaba due to the fact that Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar opined of this.

Ijtihad was necessary in order to act accordingly within new predicaments which occurred. The ruling regarding a fly falling into milk is known. However, the ruling regarding a bee falling into milk is unknown. This is why a mujtahid deploys the tactics in order to derive a maslah.

A hadith of Sahih Bukhari (1/250-251) states: “An umrah in Ramadhan equals to a Hajj with me (Rasulullah).”

In another Hadith states: “The one who performs Fajr Salah in congregation and thereafter sits till sunrise remembering Allah and performs two rakah of nafl salah, he would attain the reward of a complete hajj and umrah.” (Sunan Tirmidhi 1/130)

If a person looks at the apparent meaning of these two hadith without the medium of an Imam, he would conclude that there is no need for him to perform his fardh hajj, since he has already attained the reward of a complete hajj and a hajj with Rasulullah (PBUH). If he refers to an Imam,

he would explain that these just mean the reward of Hajj. However, these actions do not absolve him from the obligation which still remains on him. Another real example of the above is: Once a man (who was going for Umrah) came to an Aalim and said: “The Hadith says that one salaah in Makkah equals one hundred thousand salaah elsewhere.” (Sunan Ibn Majah Page 101) So if I perform one qadhaa salah there, wont it compensate for all my qadhaa salah?” The alim replied: “If your deduction is correct, then not only will it compensate for your past Salahs, rather there will be no need for you to perform any more Salaah in the future as well.”

Therefore he explained to him that this only refers to the reward and not the obligation. From this example we understand that referring directly to the Quraan and Ahadith without the medium of an Imaam is detrimental to our deen.

When such great luminaries in the field of Hadith, the likes of Imam Abu Dawood and Imam Tirmidhi who compiled books on Hadith, likewise experts like Allamah Nawawi and Hafiz Ibn Hajr who prepared extensive commentaries on Bukhari and Muslim (which run into volumes) confined themselves to following one of the four imams, then how can a layman of this era who refers to a mere translation of these very books of Ahadith regard himself absolved of following an Imam?

The policy employed by the four imams included strict scrutinisation of each chain of narration, codification, evidence, consensus and many other procedures. In short, several aspects had to be thoroughly examined before adopting a particular view in their madhab.

In the era of the sahaba, the method of education was that people acquired the knowledge of Deen (the quran and sunnah) under the guidance of those who were learned in the various branches of deen. Despite the sahaba being fully conversant in the Arabic language, yet in matters of Deen they never adopted the approach of self-study nor did they refer directly to the Quran and Hadith. They left this task to the more learned scholars amongst the companions.

The prophet (pbuh) said in a hadith: “I fear in special three shortcomings in my Ummah. Firstly, due to the abundance of material wealth and possessions, jealousy will spread among them for one another.

Secondly, they will begin to freely discuss the Holy Quraan (without referring to the Ulama and the learned), whereas many meanings in the Quran are such that they cannot be understood by anyone except Allah. In regard to such verses, the well versed scholars of the book say; “We fully believe in it, and that it has come from Allah.” (Thus how much more careful should the common people be.) Thirdly, the religious scholars will be neglected and ignored and people will not see the need to refer to them (i.e. people will adopt the approach of self-study in Deen and refer to the Quran and Hadith directly.” (At-Targheeb Wat-Tarheeb 1/152)

On one occasion a person came to Hadhrat Umar for some work. During the conversation, hadhrat Umar asked him regarding the condition of the people of the land he had come from. The person replied: “O Ameerul Mumineen, there is a great awakening among the people and people are learning the Quraan and referring to the Quraan directly in Deeni matters (i.e. without the guidance of the Ulama).” Hadhrat Ibn Abaas was present in the gathering and upon hearing the statement of this person, he said: “I take an oath on Allah, I do not like that people begin learning and studying the Quraan by themselves.” Upon this, Hadhrat Umar immediately reprimanded him and disapproved of the objection he raised against the approach of the people

After being reprimanded by Hadhrat Umar, Hadhrat Ibn Abaas says: “I then went home extremely grieved and worried and said to myself: ‘It seems that on account of my statement, I have fallen from the sight of Hadhrat Umar and lost my lofty position I was once enjoying.” He further says: “After returning home, I rested on my bed, until the womenfolk of the house became concerned of my condition. It was not due to any ailment that I had fallen ill, rather over what had occurred during the conversation with Hadhrat Umar. While I was in that condition, a person came to me and said: ‘The ameerul mumineen has sent me to call you.’ I then came out of my home and Hadhrat Umar was there waiting for me. He took hold of my hand until we were in seclusion. He then asked: “What was it that you disapproved regarding the statement made by that man earlier? I replied ‘O Umar, if i have erred, then I seek the forgiveness of Allah and repent, and I am prepared to correct my stance according to what you advise me.’ Hadhrat Umar said “No. Rather tell

me the reason for your disapproval?" I replied: 'O Ameerul Mumineen, the reason for me disapproving people referring to the Quran directly is that they will begin to reach their own conclusions and formulate their own opinions in Deen. When this will happen, then the outcome of this is that each person will have his own version of Deen and confine the truth to what he feels. This will then lead to differences and dissension coming about in the ranks of the Muslims (based on ignorance). The dissension will then lead to arguements and disputes and ultimately Muslims will be fighting each other." Hadhrat Umar was greatly pleased with what Hadhrat Ibn Abaas said and told him that he also felt the same though he hadn't expressed this to anyone till the time he mentioned it.

Another danger of leaving the confines of a madhab is when a person comes across a certain hadith that is not literal yet metaphorical. For example: "Rasulullah (PBUH) performed Zuhr and Asr together and Maghrib and Isha together without the expediency of fear and journey." (Muslim Sharif)

At face value the hadith indicates the permissibility of performing Zuhr and Asr as well as Maghrib and Isha even if there exists no valid reason for this practise. But without a doubt, the unification of Salah without reason is not held permissible by any authority. The correct meaning of the hadith is arrived at by interpretation via the faculty of Ijtihad.

The strongest daleel for the clamour of modern Ijtihad is their claim of changing circumstances of the world. They assert that the change of world circumstances warrants modernity in the deen. Since (in their opinion) Ijtihadat (principles and rules formulated on the basis of Ijtihad) are insufficient for the scientific age. On this fallacious premiss they argue that modern interpretation and exposition of the Deen are essential for attracting the modern mind to Islam.

Firstly, this arguement of the modernists is an ambigious claim. Let them pin-point exactly, after all, which questions and rulings due to modern change require alteration and abrogation under the ostensible guise of modern interpretation. We may then further scrutinise such particular issues.

In refutation of their baseless claims, it will suffice to mention that Deen is not the product of man's efforts. It is the deen perfected by Allah and

despatched for regulating our lives until the Day of Qiyamah. It therefore does not admit change and abrogation due to changing circumstances and conditions. Every Muslim implicitly believes that in Islam are answers for all developments and contingencies until the Day of Qiyamah. If there is a need for modernisation then why is the Quran the final book and why is the prophet (PBUH) the final messenger. The answer is a no-brainer. It seems as if western-liberalism has caught the mind of these people.

It seems that the objective of Salafism is to stay away from the fuqaha and ulama. Despite the fact that the prophet (PBUH) said: “A single Faqeeh is harder on shaitan than a thousand Aabids (pious worshippers).” As well as this Rasulullah (PBUH) said: “The Ulama are the Heirs of the prophets.”

Regarding the qualities of the Ulama, Allah says:

“Verily, among his servants, the Ulama fear Allah.”

“The people of knowledge are establishers of justice.”

It is within Hadith that “The nobility of knowledge is better than the nobility of worship.”

“He for whom Allah desires goodness, Allah endows him with the understanding of the deen.”

“The noblest of my Ummah are the ulama – its merciful ones.”

It is hysterical to see every Tom, Dick and Harry who has studied some hadith translations and barely learned to read the Arabic language and has a couple of degrees from a kuffar university think himself capable of making Ijtihad in even the usool. May allah save us from such deviation. It is incongruous how they just read books to derive a ruling without a teacher. Allamah Ibn Abideen has stated that: “Even if a man memorises all the books of our masters, then too for the purpose of fatwa it is a requisite that he obtains instruction from his teacher do that he be guided towards it.” (uqud rasmul mufti) These type of people are indeed lovers of modernity.

It is also important to understand that the opinions of the 4 imams absoloutely do not contradict the hadith.

An exercise to modify the madhabs will imply the initiation of a fifth madhab. Since the rulings of a Madhab are based on evidences and certain evidences are the product of interpretation, therefore unification is not possible. There are and always will be differences among the scholars who are muqallids of the same madhab. Furthermore, differences from each madhab have never resulted in conflict. Ignorance leads to disunity and conflict. We are taught to respect every madhab. Although a person may follow the Hanbali madhab, he will still insist that followers of other madhabs adhere strictly to their own madhab and to the rulings and teachings of their respective schools of thought. The belief of the followers is that all Madhabs are on the truth (haqq) because of their basis on Quran and Sunnah. While conceding that errors are possible and that errors in opinion have been commited, no Madhab can be branded as deviated. Rasulullah (pbuh) said “the differences in my ummah are a blessing.” Such differences were present amongst the companions also. These differences were inherited by the students of the Sahaba, hence the different opinions. The madhabs do not advocate sectarianism or antagonism to other madhabs as salafis claim. Rather the problem we have is with those who are ignorant.

No one undertakes the task of completing a construction of a building without having the correct qualifications. They leave this for the professional architects. In the same way, a normal person does not conduct a surgery without understanding the procedures. Therefore how do you expect an individual to deduce rulings from Quran and Sunnah. This is why the prophet (PBUH) said: “One who renders a legal ruling without knowledge, its sin will be upon the givers of the ruling.” Miskaat Page 27

The Sahaba and Tabieen were not all of the same rank and standing. In fact some were Mujtahid and others were Muqallids.

Makkah – hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas

Madinah – Hadhrat Zaid Ibn Thabit

Kufa – Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Masood

Yemen – Hadhrat Muadh Ibn Jabal

Basrah – Hadhrat Anas ibn Malik

Whenever any one of the four khalifas used to impart their own judgement and do Iijtihad they would clarify that this was their own personal viewpoint. There are quran verses to show that following th path of the righteous will lead you ultimately to the straight path. “Follow the path of one who has turned towards me.” (Surah Luqman Verse 15) “And when they become steadfast and firmly believed in our revelations, we appointed leaders from amongst them who gave directions at our bidding.”. (Surah Sajdah 32-33) “And we made them leaders who used to guide others by our command, and we inspired them to do great works.” (Surah Ambiyaa – 73)

Taqleed is being subjected to much scorn, ridicule and rejection by modernist Muslims schooled in the liberal culture of the west while being largely uneducated in terms of the Shariah. Western liberalism has undoubtedly captured their minds, hence they labour to create some kind of harmony between the rigid demands of Islam and so-called rational dictates of modern reason. They are saddled with the problem of harmonising Islam with modernism and in the process of their evil pursit they are constrained to abandon any Islamic demand which thwarts of impedes their godly mission.Taqleed (for them) is a thorn in their flesh and it has to be eliminated to attain their pernicious goal. Self conceit and self opinion are the products of western materialism and liberalism. These diseases, gripping many muslims in this age, have lamentably disturbed the equilibrium of Muslim intelligence. The ailing muslim intelligence of the these times has been drastically jarred that it is incapable of discerning the dangerous abyss it is slipping into by shunning the vital and compulsory injunction of Taqleed. It fails to understand the Ultimate consequence of abandonment of Taqleed is the abdication of faith. Those who shun Taqleed hover on the brink of kufr.The ghair muqallid will always forever dwell in confusion and uncertainty. His faith suffers from scepticism. If such men of superb knowledge (such as Imam razi and Imam Ghazaali) discerned and acknowledged the imperative need for taqleed, then who are the men of today that abandon it? The realisation for the need of Taqleed increases proportionately with the increase of one’s knowledge. The greater one’s

knowledge, the more will one discern the need for taqleed. On numerous occasions, a man of great knowledge is confronted with problems which defy his opinion and challenge his intellect. He is saved from the danger of deviation by seeking succour in the taqleed of his seniors. Thus, no one can ever be independent of Taqleed. Taqleed is negated at the peril of destroying Imaan.

Salafism Exposed

Salafiyyat is the latest trend in the world which has been given a deeni body and form through bereft of the spirit and soul of deen. After a lengthy period of 1300 years this neo-madhab group made its sudden appearance. Most people ascribing to this ideology wish to lead a free and unhindered life. They do not want to be bound by any restrictions which come in the path of their worldly interests. However, at the same time their aim is to appear as Deeni commited people treading on the path of deen. They totally disregard the pious predeccesors despite

being ironically named after them. As well as this, they use their own opinion to manipulate hadith in a way to suit their own needs and desires. The Ummah was systemised and codified in certain rules and regulations in line with a school of thought. Since the arrival of this misguided sect, muslims have been left baffled as to which path to choose. The salafis have a clever tactic of targeting young laypeople who have very less understanding of the Islamic Jurisprudential system. As well as this, they target individuals who have a keen desire of learning more about their deen however lack the qualifications to read and understand hadith independently. They believe that their methodology of directly looking at the Quran and Sunnah with no input from the consensus of the scholars is the correct procedure of understanding Islam. Little do they realise that the Imams had beautified this procedure by systemising the Quran and hadith into rulings by scrutinising each chain of transmission with a panel of scholars. They were the best generation of people according to the prophet (PBUH). Yet, salafis disregard all of this to suit their own agenda. They pick and choose certain rulings to appease the public into being attracted to their style of viewing narrations under an ignorant view. In doing so, they deliberately ignored the other authentic narrations which establish the practise adopted by the other madhahib in that maslah. They choose whichever ruling they deem to be the strongest and most-correct. Indeed, they have deviated from the straight path. May Allah Guide them – Ameen.

The purpose of Salafism

After a thorough study and examination of this new madhab called salafism one reaches this conclusion that the purpose and aim of those who were responsible for spreading this mindset in the world in the beginning of the 12th century was:

1) To create internal fights and dissension within the Ummah especially amongst those who ascribe themselves to one of the four madhabs.

2) To cause the minds of the muslims to be stormed by suspicions and doubts in deen.

3) To remove the confidence of the people from the pious predeccesors and the four Imams.

4) To cause the masses to become liberal and lax in matters of religion and to make people pick and choose to suit their own whims and fancies.

In order to accomplish their mission, the plan of action they executed was:

1) They used the differences between the four madhahib as a basis for creating confusion and doubts.

2) They invited towards practising upon isolated opinions which oppose the mainstream view of the Ummah.

3) They allowed the masses to randomly choose from different madhahib and not to blindly follow one madhahib.

4) They promoted the concept of rationalising deen to suit contemporary times.

5) They encouraged the masses to refer directly to the Quran and Hadith in finding religious soloutins to modern day problems.

6) They exhorted the masses to reinterpret the Quraan and Hadith to fit contemporary situations.

Those who tread along the path of Salafiyaat will only remain muslim by name, but bereft of the Sunnah of Rasulullah (pbuh). As far as their lifestyle and outlook is concerned, they will subject themselves to western cultures and traditions, thus, leading a carefree life governed by desires. An interesting fact is that Salafis are obliged to show speciality to Arab people – this is stated in their creed of Al-Barbahari. This could

possibly suggest the reason as to why they flourished in Arab countries. Unfortunately the fitna is spreading at a rapid pace all around the world.

It is reported from Hadhrat Ali that Rasulullah (PBUH) said: “Soon a time will dawn upon the people when Islam will only remain in name and the Quraan will be confined to its text. The masaajid will be full of people but void of misguidance. The ulama (of that time) will be the worst people on the face of the earth. They will be the cause of mischief and corruption spreading in the earth and the corruption will return to them.”

Abu Tha’labah reports that Rasulullah said: “A time will dawn upon my Ummah before Qiyaamah when you will witness people fulfilling their greed, following their base desires, giving preference to dunya over deen and being satisfied with their own reasoning and understanding.”

The prophet (PBUH) has forewarned us of such a time which we are presently witnessing. The preservation of the true spirit and teaching of Deen has become secondary and people have attempted to scuttle the smooth sailing ship of Islam by creating an environment of self opinion and deviation from the firmly established path of the pious predeccesors.

Following one of the four imams is wujoob-bil-gharihi (compulsory on account of it only being a medium to fulfilling the Islamic injunction to Deen, though it isn’t directly established in any of the textual proofs via the Quran or Hadith) in deen. The reason for it receiving the status of wujoob is that without Taqleed of the four Imams, one will not be able to correctly practise upon the entire deen. Especially in this time and age where we see science and technology at its peak, new inventions and developments have become a norm in current times. In short, the world has evolved to such limits which were never witnessed previously throughout the annals of human history. The progress and advancements of the world in the present era poses a host of challenges before the Ulama. Thus we find the masses constantly reffering their Deeni matters and problems to the Ulama seeking Islamic rulings and guidance due to the unfolding of new events and developments. Subsequently, in the face of these challenges we find the Ulama completely reliant and dependent upon the works of ther four Imams. They refer to the books of these Imams who were blessed with such foresight and illuminated knowledge that despite living approximately

thirteen hundred years ago, yet they were able to produce accurate solutions for situations surfacing centuries later. The answers and solutions which they presented were directly sourced out from the Quran and the Ahadith of Rasulullah.

When practising one of these four madhabs is the only way for us to practise our deen on entirely, following one of the four madhahib will thus become compulsory; not because following these Aimah is an explicit injuction in Deen, but because there is no other route one can adopt whereby he will be able to practise upon the entire deen without omitting anything. This is the legal status of following a madhab.

When examining the lives of these four imams, the glaring feature that we notice is that they all strictly adhered to the sunnah of the prophet (PBUH) in every facet of their lives. They could be aptly described as entirely a personification of the sunnah of rasulullah (PBUH) in every walk of life.

The purpose of life is worship. Everything else is secondary. Allah has provided us with everything necessary in order to live and fulfil this goal. We have been given air, food, water etc. Wouldn't Allah provide us with scholars in order to understand the Quran and Sunnah? Or is this a task we must undertake? Hence, we come to understand the great luminaries to be produced in the form of the four Imams.

In conclusion to this vastly discussed topic I would like you to picture a scene. Consider if one hundred people in this time and age begin extracting laws from the Quraan and Hadith, each one presenting to the public his personal viewpoint of a verse with each person reaching different conclusions, will we regard this as a service to the deen or a disservice? Will Allah entrust us to our limited understanding and logic? If one prefers to adopt this method in matters of deen we can well imagine the detrimental outcome and grave consequences it will create in the Ummah, let alone the confusion and perplexity it will produce in the mind and heart. Thus the safest and most cautious path to adopt would be to follow one of the four great Imams of fiqh whose lessons and teachings have been thoroughly scrutinised and researched. In fact, it would not be incorrect to declare that in order for a muslim to be able to

practise deen entirely it would be waajib for him to align himself to one of the four madhahib.

May Allah bless each and every member of the Ummah with the true understanding of the Deen and the ability to follow in the path of the pious and righteous predecessors.

The four esteemed Imams

Through studying the lives of the four Imams (Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafiee, Imam Malik, Imam Ahmad) one would undoubtedly be convinced that they were worthy of the position of Imamat. Their piety, righteousness and consistency in adhering to every teaching of the Quraan and Sunnah and possessing encompassing knowledge of every department of Deen had made them the centre of attraction in their eras and a source of guidance for the Ummah for centuries that followed up to this day. They could be aptly described as the bearers of the

knowledge of the former people (the Sahaabah and Taabieen). On account of this, from the millions of scholars in every field, Allah handpicked them and divinely selected them for the guidance of this Ummah for the centuries that passed up until this day. Due to the sheer amount of information regarding these esteemed scholars being available, in-sha-allah, I want to keep this part of the book as brief as possible in order to emphasise the main points as to why their selected madhabs have flourished and prospered.

Imam Abu Hanifa

Imaam Abu Hanifa's name was Nu'man bin Thaabit. He was born in the year 80 AH and passed away in the year 150 AH.

Allamah Ibn Katheer (d.774 AH) writes about Imam Abu Hanifa: "....One of the four Imams of the madhahib that are followed. He was the first amongst them in demise, as he had also witnessed the era of the Sahaba. He saw Anas Ibn Malik. It is related that he also met other Sahaabah as well. Some even mention that he narrated from seven of the Sahaabah. And Allah Taala knows best."

Allamah Dhahabi (d.778 AH) states: "He (Abu Hanifa) met Anas on a number of occasions when he visited them in Kufa."

Piety and virtues

Allamah Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi states: "It has been recorded about Imam Abu Hanifa that he performed Salatul Fajr and Isha with the same wudhu for forty years and it is also recorded that he completed 7000 Quran Khatams (complete recitals) of the Quran in his lifetime."

Imam Shafiee says that on one occasion Imaam Malik was asked – "Did you ever meet Imam Abu Hanifah?" Imam Malik replied. "Yes, Imam Abu Hanifa was a man who if he claimed that a certain pillar was made of gold, he would present sound and unbreakable evidence to establish this claim."

Shareek says: "Imam Abu Hanifa was a person who used to observe silence for lengthy periods, and a man of great intelligence."

Ibn Ishaaq Samarqandi says that Imaam Abu Yusuf said: “Imam Abu Hanifa used to complete a khatam of the Quran every night within one rakaat.”

Misaar bin Kidaam says: “One night I went into the Masjid where I saw a man performing Salah. I was taken aback by his melodious recitation of the Holy Quraan. When he reached the seventh juz of the Quraan, I thought that he may go into ruku any moment but he didn’t until he recited one third of the Quraan. I thought that he may go into ruku at the termination of half the Quraan, but he continued until he recited the entire Quraan in one rakaat. Upon closer inspection, I realised it was Imam Abu Hanifa.

Abu Muayyid Khwaarizmi narrates that Abdullah bin Mubarak said: On one occasion a few goats were stolen in Kufa. On hearing this, Imam Abu Hanifa enquired about the average maximum age of a goat. When he was informed that a goat normally lives up to around seven years, he abstained from eating goat meat for seven years.”

Imam Abu Hanifa was once asked: “How did you acquire this high position in Deen and the great treasures of Ilm?” Imam Abu Hanifa replied – “I never acted miserly with the knowledge that Allah gave me. Instead I always shared it with the people, and I never regard it to be below my dignity to seek knowledge from the Ulama.”

His Madhab

Allamah Sharaani states in his kitaab ‘Al-Meezan’, “I was blessed with a vision from the side of Allah wherein I had seen the Madhahib of the imams in the forms of streams. I saw the madhahib of Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafiee, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal as large streams flowing with force, while the Madhahib of the other Imams of that era which had become extinct were small streams which later dried up and became hard like rocks. From the four Imams, the imam whose stream was the longest was Imam Abu Hanifa. It was followed by the stream of Imam Malik and then by Imam Shafii, then Imam Ahmad. The one with the shortest stream was Imam Dawood – whose madhab was discontinued in the 5th century due to being deserted. I interpreted this dream as a reference to the duration of the time the different madhahib will be practised on.”

Glad tidings

Hafiz Jalaalud Deen Suyooti mentions that the Ulama have mentioned that the prophet (PBUH) had issued glad tidings in favour of Imam Abu Hanifa in the following Hadith – Imam bukhari and Imam Muslim narrate it from Hadhrat Abu Hurairah that Rasulullah (PBUH) said: “Had knowledge been at the Thurayya star, then Allah will create a man from Persia who will acquire this knowledge.”

Allamah Suyooti says that this hadith is authentic and that it is a glad tiding in favour of Imam Abu Hanifa.

Abu Yahya al-Himmani says that he heard Imam Abu Hanifa say: “I once saw a dream which made me very concerned. I had came to Basrah, and instructed a person to go and ask Muhammad Bin Sireen the interpretation of the dream on my behalf. Muhammad Bin Sireen upon hearing the dream, replied: “The one who had seen the dream will be blessed by Allah with bounties of gathering the Ahadith of the prophet (PBUH) and also the knowledge of the deen, and present it to the Ummah.”

Generosity

Muthanna bin Rajja said: “Whenever Imaam Abu Hanifa would spend on his family, he would spend the same amount in charity.”

Imam Abu Hanifa used to spend cash to Baghdad in order to purchase goods to be sold in Kufa. The profit would be accumulated and utilised in the food, clothing and other needs of the Muhaditeen. He would then present the remaining profit to them in the form of cash and he would tell them, “Praise Allah alone and not me. I have not disbursed anything from my wealth but from the wealth of Allah. By Allah, whatever he has bestowed upon me is your trust which he has sent to you through me.”

Imaam Misar bin Kidaam narrates: “It was the habit of Imam Abu Hanifa that whatever he purchased for his family, he would spend the same amount on the senior Ulama, and whenever he purchased clothing for his family, he used to buy the same amount for the senior Ulama as well. At the onset of the fruit season, whatever he intended to purchase for his family members he would first purchase the same for the senior Ulama.”

Principles governing his madhab

Nooh al Jaami reports that Imam Abu Hanifa said: “We submit ourselves to whatever is reported from the prophet (PBUH) and from the Sahaabah. We give them preference over the statements of others and personal logic. However, that which is reported from anyone else, then they are men and so are we. (Hence, we are not bound to accept it, instead we will employ our ijtihaad in reaching the conclusion).”

His expertise in the field of hadith

His expertise and proficiency in the field of Hadith can be summed up in the words of Imam Abu Yusuf who himself was a great Muhaddith and the Ustaad of Imaam Ahmad Bin Hambal – He says: “Imam Abu Hanifa had much more insight regarding authentic Hadith than me.” He further says: “I have not witnessed anyone more learned in the field of HAdith than Imam Abu Hanifa.”

Abu Muhammad Al-Haarithi narrates that Imam Abu Yuduf said: “Whenever we discussed any Deeni issue with Imam Abu Hanifa to which his contemporaries unanimously agreed, I would go to the Mashayikh of Kufa to search for a clear Hadith in verification of his opinion. I would often come across two or three Ahadith which I used to present to him in verification of his opinion. I once enquired from him regarding how he had come to know about this Hadith. He replied: “I am well acquainted with the Ahadith reported by the Ulama of Kufa.”

Abu Yaqoob Yusuf Bin Ahmad Makki narrates that Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Ebrahim Dawraqi said, “I was present in the gathering where Yahya bin Maeen was asked about Abu Hanifa. He replied: “He is reliable in terms of accepting Hadith from him. I have not heard any of the Muhadditheen potraying him to be unreliable.

Look at Imam Shu’bah; he writes to Imam Abu Hanifa requesting him to explain a few Ahadith, and Shubah after all is Shubah. (In other words, in the field of Hadith, Imam Shubah is of a very eminent rank.)

Imam Abu Hanifa declared that a narrator should only narrate a Hadith if he remembered it thoroughly, from the day he heard it till the day he is narrating it.

Ali bin Madeeni says: “Sufyaan Thauri, Abdullah bin Mubaarak, Hammad bin Zaid, Hishaam, Waki bin Jarrah, Abbaad bin Awaam and Jafar bin Aun has narrated Ahadith from Imam Abu Hanifa. His Ahadith are quite accepted by the Muhaditheen.”

Shabaabah says that Shubah held a favourable opinion of Imam Abu Hanifa.

Khateeb Baghdaadi narrates that Sufyaan bin Uyaynah said: “The first person who accorded me a seat of honour in the field of Hadith was Imam Abu Hanifa. When I arrived in Kufa, he openly informed the people that I am most knowledgeable in regard to the Ahadith of Amr bin Dinaar. The people started gathering around me and I started teaching those Ahaadith to them.”

Sufyaan bin Uyaynah (the Ustaad of Imam Shafiee) is reported to have said: “My sight has not fallen on anyone as great as Imam Abu Hanifa.”

Hibbaan bin Moosa said: “We were once seated in the company of Abdullah bin Mubaarak (the student of Imam Abu Hanifa and from the Ustadhs of Imam Bukhari {one of the narrators appearing in Bukhari Sharif}). He was dictating Ahadith to us, when he said: “Numaan bin Thaabit narrated to me...”. Someone asked him, “O Abu Abdir rahmaan, who are you referring to by this name Nu’maan bin Thaabit?” He replied, “ I am referring to Imam Abu Hanifa, who is a treasure house of ‘ilm’.” Upon hearing this, some of the students terminated the copying down of Hadith from him. Abdullah bin Mubaarak remained silent for some time, after which he remarked, “O people, how disrespectful of you! Certainly you are not aware of the status of the Imams in the deen. Nobody is as worthy of being followed as Imam Abu Hanifa. Indeed he was an Imam. He was extremely pious and his reputation was untarnished. He was a very devout Aalim and a Faqeeh. He explained Ilm with deep insight and profound understanding. He possessed unique Taqwa that very few people possess.” The narrator adds: “Abdullah Bin Mubarak thereafter swore an oath that he will not teach them for another month.”

His expertise in the field of fiqh

Yahya bin Maeen is reported to have said: “According to me, the most reliable and most esteemed Qiraat is the Qiraat of Hamza while in Fiqh it

is the Fiqh of Imam Abu Hanifa. I have found the predecessors holding the same view as well."

Imam Shafiee is reported to have said about Imam Abu Hanifa: "People are entirely dependent upon Imam Abu Hanifa in Fiqh."

It is also worthy to note Imam Abu Hanifa met Imam Malik on several occasions and both respected each other dearly. They discussed many different topic and when one spoke, the other remained silent. As well as this, they performed Hajj together. In another instance, Imam Malik saw Imam Abu Hanifa outside the Masjid and he insisted that Imam Abu Hanifa enter the Masjid first as a sign of respect. They debated and accepted each other's perspective and both had love and esteem for one another.

When Yahya bin Maeen was asked whether Sufyaan Thauri narrated any Hadith from Imam Abu Hanifa, he said: "Surely he narrated from him. Abu Hanifah was a very reliable narrator and most truthful in expounding the laws of Fiqh. In regards to the deen of Allah, he was regarded as the most reliable and trustworthy.

The praise of Imam Shafiee regarding Imam Abu Hanifa

The leader of the Muslims, Imam Abu Hanifa, has beautified the cities and those who reside in it.

With laws of the Quraan, Ahadith of Rasulullah and the Fiqh of Deen, just like the beauty of the Quraan over all other heavenly scriptures. There was no one like him in the east or in the west, and nor in the city of Kufa.

So may the special mercy of Allah perpetually rain upon him, till the end of time as long as the Quran is recited.

Imam Malik

Imam Malik was born in the year 95AH and was 15 years younger than Imam Abu Hanifa. He passed away on the 14th of Rabi-ul Awaal, 179 AH.

His expertise

Abu Nu'aim narrates from Abu Musaab: "I heard Imam Malik say: 'I never passed a fatwa until seventy scholars bore testimony to the fact that I was worthy of issuing fatwa.'

Allamah Zarqaani states that Imam Maalik started teaching Hadith at the age of 17.

Imam Malik said: "I wrote one hundred thousand Ahadith with my right hand."

Imam Shafiee said: "Had it not been for Imam Malik and Sufyan bin uyaynah the knowledge of Makkah and Madinah (Hijaz) would have been lost."

Hammad bin Salamah says: "If someone had to ask me to appoint a person from whom the Ummah of the prophet (PBUH) would be able to attain knowledge from, I would regard Imam Malik bin Anas to be the most suitable and appropriate person for this task."

Once a person asked Imam Shafi'ee, "Did you ever meet anyone like Imam Malik?" Imam Shafiee replied: "I have heard some of those who were more senior than us in age and knowledge saying that they had never seen anyone like Imaam Malik, so how could we have seen someone like him?"

Muthannah bin Saeed mentions that I heard Imam Malik say: "There is no night that passes except that I see Rasūlullāh (PBUH) in a dream."

His Caution in Deen

Abdur Rahman Bin Mahdi says: "A man once asked Imam Malik a maslah (ruling) to which he responded: " I am not sure about it." The man exclaimed: "I have indeed travelled to you from such and such a place to ask you about it!" Imam Malik responded: "When you return to your place, inform the people that I have said I am not sure about it."

Haitham ibn Jameel says: "I was present on one occasion when Imam Maalik was asked fourty eight questions – thirty two of which he answered by saying 'I don't know'."

Glad tidings

Hafiz Jalaalud Deen Suyooti says that the Ulama mentioned that Rasulullah had issued glad tidings in favour of Imam Malik in the following manner: “Soon a time will come when people would travel lengthy journeys beating their camels in pursuit of ilm. They would not find anyone as learned as the Aalim of Madinah.” It is also reported in a narration of Tirmidhi that Rasulullah said: “Knowledge will be cut off, and there will not be anyone more knowledgeable than the Aalim of Madinah.” Sufyaan bin Uyaynah said: “The Muhaditheen attributed these glad tidings of Rasulullah to Imam Malik.”

Mutarrif bin Abi Abdilllah said: “I saw Rasulullah in a dream sitting in the masjid with people around him. Imam Malik was standing before him and there was musk in front of Rasulullah. He was taking handfuls fro it and giving it to Imam Malik, and Imam Malik was distributing it amongst the people.” Mutarrif then commented, “I interpreted it as the knowledge of Deen and following the Sunnah.”

His respect for Hadith

His gathering was one of great awe, forbearance and knowledge. He was a noble man who was endowed with awe and respect. There was no arguing, shouting or raising of voices in his gatherings.

Ibn Habib said: “When Imam Malik sat to teach Hadith, no one moved from their places until he got up.”

Whenever he sat down to narrate Hadith, he applied perfume and donned new clothes. A carpet was set out for him on which he sat. He emerged from his house with a great amount of humility. He sat before the Hadith of the prophet (PBUH) with utmost respect and dignity. Oud used to be burnt in the gathering where the Hadith of Rasulullah (PBUH) used to be taught by Imam Malik.

Abdullah Bin Mubarak said: “I was once present in the gathering of Imam Malik while he was relating Hadith to us and a scorpion stung him 16 times. Imam Malik’s facial complexion began to change colour, however he continued teaching the Hadith of Rasulullah. After the lesson was over and the students had departed, I asked him the reason for the change in his complextion during the lesson. He informed me

regarding the scorpion sting and said, ‘I did not move from my place out of respect for the Hadith of Rasulullah.’

Abu Musab says that Imam Malik used to only narrate Hadith in the state of wudhu, out of respect for the Hadith of Rasulullah.

His sincerity

Allamah Zarqani mentioned: “When Imam Malik prepared his Kitaab “Al-Muwatta”, he doubted the sincerity and thus feared that the kitaab may not gain acceptance in the sight of Allah. Hence, as a means of testing his Ikhlaas, he resolved within his heart to insert the kitaab in water. In order to determine whether his kitab was written with Ikhlaas, he begged Allah to reveal to him this way that if the kitaab gets wet, then it is a sign the kitaab was not written with ikhlaas. After placing the kitaab in water and removing it, he found it was completely dry.”

His love and respect for Madinah Tayyibah

It is related that he only left the Haram of Madinah if he had a valid reason.

Imam Malik possessed great love for the land of Madinah Munawwarah. This love was on account of the love he had for Rasulullah.

Allamah ibn Khalliqaan writes: “Imaam Malik never rode a conveyance in the blessed city of Medina. Even at the time when he grew old and became extremely weak, he preferred to walk rather than being transported by a conveyance. When Imam Malik was asked the reason, he mentioned: ‘I feel extremely difficult to ride on a conveyance in the blessed city of Madinah Munawarah, while the prophet of Allah (PBUH) is buried beneath the ground.”

Imam Malik used to commence teaching the students of Hadith and those residing in Madinah Munawarrah before teaching others. When he was asked the reason for showing preference to the students of Hadith and the people of Madinah, he exclaimed: “These are the neighbours of Rasulullah.”

Important Fact regarding His Life

Imam Malik resided in the house of Abdullah bin Masood in Madinah Munawarah. He did not possess his own house. Instead he rented the house until his demise. In the Masjid, he sat where Umar used to sit and this was the very same place where Rasulullah would lay his bedding whilst sitting for Itikaaf.

Imam Shafiee

Imam Shafiee's name was Muhammad bin Idrees. He was born in the year 150 AH. (the very year Imam Abu Hanifa passed away) and passed away in the month of Rajab, 204 AH.

His expertise

Imam Ahmad said: "Anyone who used ink and a pen (for the knowledge of the deen) is undoubtedly indebted to Imam Shafiee in some way or the other." Imam Ahmad also said: "For forty years I have been supplicating for Imam Shafiee after Salah."

Once Imam Ahmad's son asked him - "what type of a person was Imam Shafiee? I hear you often supplicating for him?" He replied: "O my beloved son! Imam Shafiee was like the sun for the world and a safety for the people. Think about it, do these two (bounties) have any substitute?"

Abdur Rahmaan bin Mahdi says: "I do not perform any salaah, except that I also make duaa for Imam Shafiee,"

Imam Shafiee was titled in Baghdad as 'Naasirus Sunnah' (the saviour of the Sunnah). Ibn Katheer says: "He memorized the Quraan when he was only seven, the Muwatta of Imam Malik when he was ten, and his Shaykh, Muslim bin Khallaad az-Zanji permitted him to pass verdicts (fawas) when he was only fifteen. (Some narrations state that he was eighteen.) Abu Thowr, one of the Mujtahideen of that era, says: "We never saw anyone like Imam Shafiee."

Abu Ubaid says: "I never saw anyone more eloquent, intelligent and cautious (referring to his state of Wara) than Imaam Shafiee." Imam Ahmad would relate the Hadith narrated by Abu Dawood wherein Abu Hurairah reports that Rasulullah said: "Verily Allah appoints for this Ummah, upon every hundred years, a reviver for its Deen." Imam

Ahmad would then comment: “Umar bin Abdul Aziz was sent at the end of the first hundred years and Imam Shafiee was sent at the end of the second century as a reviver.”

Ayyoub bin Suwaid says: “I did not think I would live to see a man as great as Imam Shafiee.”

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal said: “Imam Shafiee was from amongst the most eloquent of people.”

His piety

Rabi says: “Imam Shafiee used to divide his night into three portions. The first third was for writing, the second third for salah and the last third for rest.” Rabi also said: “In the month of Ramadhan, Imam Shafiee used to complete the recitation of the Quran sixty times. However it is not possible to calculate how much of it was accomplished in Salah.”

Rabi once said: “Imam Shafiee used to complete thirty recitals of the Quraan in every month, but during the month of Ramadhan, he used to complete sixty besides what he recited during Salah.”

Ebrahim bin Muhammad Ash-Shafiee says: “I never saw anyone perform Salah better than Imam Shafiee. The reason for this is that he had learnt how to perform Salaah from Muslim bin Khaalid, who learnt from ibn Jurayj, who learnt from Atta, who learnt from ibn Zubair, who learnt from Abu Bakr, who learnt from Nabi.

Glad tidings

Hafiz Jalaalud Deen Suyooti says that the Ulama have mentioned that Rasulullah had issued glad tidings in favour of Imam Shafiee in the following manner: “Do not talk ill of the Quraysh, as an Aalim of the Quraysh would (in the near future) fill the entire world with ilm (knowledge).” The Ulama say that this glad tiding was in reference to Imam Shafiee.

Ibnu Abdil Hakam says that when the mother of Imam Shafiee was pregnant with him, she saw a dream as though she gave birth to a star that became apparent in Egypt, and thereafter a piece of it landed in every town. The interpreter of dreams interpreted this dream as meaning

that she will give birth to an Aalim, whose knowledge will be an exclusive for the people of Egypt at first, and then it will spread throughout the world."

His intelligence

Imam Muzani reports that on one occasion we were present by Imam Shafiee when an old man wearing woollen clothing appeared. The old man then asked Imam Shafi: "May I ask a question?" Imam Shafiee gave him permission. He then asked: "What are the Sharia proofs in the Deen of Allah?" Imam Shafiee replied: "The kitaab of Allah." He then asked: "And what else?" Imam Shafiee replied: "The Sunnah of Rasulullah." He then asked: "And what else?" Imam Shafiee replied: "The consensus of the Ummah." He then asked: "What is your proof for this?" Imam Shafiee thought for a while. The old man then said: "I give you respite for three days, either you bring me proof from the Quraan or seek forgiveness and repent to Allah." The facial complexion of Imam Shafi changed. He then went and did not come out until the third day between Zuhr and Asr, in the condition that he was extremely sick. He hardly sat down when the old man came, greeted him and sat beside him. He then asked for his proof. Imam Shafiee said: "Yes", and he began reciting these verses:

And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows a path other than the path of the believers, we shall (forsake him) and let him continue on his path, and thereafter We shall drive him towards Hell, and evil it is as an abode. (Surah Nisa, 115)

The man said: "You have spoken the truth." The man then left. Imam Shafiee said to those seated around him: "I recited the entire Quraan thrice daily for three days, until the proof finally dawned upon me."

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal said: "A scholar of Hadith can never get satiated from studying the kitabs of Imam Shafiee(due to the abundant and profound knowledge contained in it)."

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal said: "The Fuqaha were the doctors, and the Muhaditheen were the pharmacists, Muhammad bin Idress (Imam Shafiee) came as both a doctor and a pharmacist.

His Ikhlaas, Humility and Love for Brotherhood

Imam Rabee mentions that Imam Shafiee said: “It is my desire that people learn and take benefit from the knowledge (in my kitabs), without anything being attributed to me.”

Younus As-Sadafi says: “I did not see anyone more intelligent than Imam Shafiee. I debated with him on one occasion regarding a certain maslah, then we separated. He thereafter took hold of my hand and said: ‘O Abu Moosa, why can’t we still remain closely attached as brothers, even though that I notice that we do not agree on certain issues.”

The Durood of Imam Shafiee

Ibn Bunaan Asbahaani says that I once saw Rasulullah in a dream and asked him, ‘O Rasulullah, has any special honour been granted to Muhammad bin Idrees Shafiee who is the son of your uncle (uncle has been mentioned because Imam Shafi’s ancestory meets Rasulullah’s ancestory at Abd Yazeed bin Hishaam. Hishaam was the great grandfather of Rasulullah (PBUH). Rasulullah (PBUH) replied: “Yes indeed. I have supplicated to Allah that he be saved from the reckoning on the day of Qiyammah.” I then asked, “O Rasulullah, on account of which deed did he become worthy of such a favour?” Rasulullah replied: “It is because he has recited such a durood upon me that no one else ever recited.” I then enquired: “O Rasulullah, what is that durood?” Rasulullah replied:

“*O Allah! Bestow special mercy upon Hadhrat Muhammad equivalent to the number of times that he was remembered, and bestow special mercy upon Hadhrat Muhammad equivalent to the number of times that the neglectful forgot to remember him.”*

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal

Imam Ahmad was born in the year 164 AH and passed away on the morning of Friday the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal, 241 AH at the age of 77.

His expertise

A reputed Muhaddith, Ebrahim Al-Harbi (d.285 AH) says: “I had the opportunity of seeing Imam Ahmad bin Hambal. It seemed as if his heart was a treasure-chest containing all the knowledge granted to human

beings, past and present. He could reveal whatever he saw relevant, and hold back what he did not desire to divulge." Abu Zur'ah says: "Imam Ahmad was a Hafiz of one million Ahadith." Someone asked: "How do you know?" He said: "I revised with him, and noted the chapters from him." Imam Abdur Razzaq said "I never saw anyone greater in Fiqh and Wara (caution in matters of Deen) than Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal."

Harmala has reported that I heard Imam Shafiee say: "At the time when I left Baghdad, I did not leave any person behind that was greater than Imam Ahmad in knowledge and Fiqh."

Ali bin Madeeni said; "At the time of crisis, Allah had supported this Deen with two personalites, with Abu Bakr on the day when the tribes had turned apostate, and with Imam Ahmad bin Hambal at the time the Ummah was tested with the fitna of the muatazila (a deviated sect).

His Humility and Character

Muhammad ibnul Hassan bin Haroon said: "I saw Abu Abdullah (IMAM AHMED) when he was walking. He disliked that anyone should follow him.

Imam Yahya bin Maeen says: "I never saw the like of Imam Ahmad. We accompanied him for fifty years. He never once flaunted himself for the good that he possessed."

Trials and tribulations

Imam Ahmad was unimaginably harassed and tortured by the rulers of his time. During Ramadhan 221 AH when he was 57 years of age, he was imprisoned and lashed. The reason for this was due to the ruling (maslah) he passed refuting the muatazilah (a deviated sect) regarding a certain issue. He was severely lashed eighteen times, which caused him to fall unconscious. Thereafter he was thrown down upon his face, a mat was placed over him and his body was trampled. When he regained consciousness and food was placed before him, he refused to eat as he was fasting. Each one of those who took part or witnessed the lashing was forgiven by Imam Ahmad except those who were in deviance. He showed endurance and forbearance during being tortured and may allah give him the highest level of Jannah to dwell in as his eternal abode.

The Period after the Trial

The Caliph Mutawakkil succeeded Caliph Waathiq in 232 AH. He held Imam Ahmad in high esteem, but Imam Ahmad remained cautious since he regarded the favours of the king as a temptation towards evil. Once Mutawakkil sent him a bag of ten thousand dirhams and about two hundred dinars. It was emphasised that he should accept it lest the king would be offended if the gift was refused. Imam Ahmad did not even look at it. At the time of Maghrib, he called his son Saalih and said, "Keep this by you." Before dawn the next morning, Imam Ahmad called for his son, who immediately came. He said to him, "I haven't slept last night", and he began to weep. He continued, "All my life I remained safe from the rulers and kings. Now, in old age, I am being tested with them. I have decided to distribute this wealth in the morning. That morning, he continued distributing the money to the various factions of the poor and needy until the entire amount was spent. He then also gave the bag away to a destitute person. His son says: "We were experiencing such poverty (at that time) which only Allah knew."

His piety

His son Abdullah relates: "My father used to perform three hundred rakaat daily. When he became ill due to the lashes which weakened him, he used to perform one hundred and fifty rakaat. At that time he was close to eighty years of age. He used to recite one-seventh of the the Quraan daily – thereby completing the Quran in seven days. Besides the Salah of the day, he used to complete one recital in seven nights as well. After performing Isha salah, he used to have a light nap, then stay awake up to the morning performing Salah and making dua. My father performed Hajj five time, three on foot and two by conveyance. On one of his journeys of Hajj he spent only 20 dirhams.

Ebrahim bin Shammass says: "I knew Imam Ahmad as a child, staying awake during the night (in Ibaadah)."

His Adab (Respect) in Deen

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal never called any of his teachers by their names out of respect for them. Rather, he would refer to them by their titles.

Once, Imam Ahmad was lying down due to an illness. In the middle of the discussion someone mentioned the name of Ebrahim bin Tahmaan. On listening to this name, Imam Ahmad immediately sat up out of respect. Thereafter he remarked, “It is inappropriate that the names of the elders are mentioned whilst we are sitting and relaxing.”

I hope we can learn to contemplate the status of the four imams and the impact they had in religion. May Allah shower his mercy upon them and resurrect us with them. With the grace and power of Allah, May all the muslim ummah unite and aim to reach the ultimate goal of Jannah. Ameen.

ISIS – A derivative of SALAFISM

According to many people, Salafism/Wahabism is an extremist ideology created in order to terrorise the Aqeedah of mainstream muslims as well as to invoke radicalism within Islam. As well as this, the aim of Salafism is to promote controversial beliefs to confuse and baffle the youth into being intense and manipulating them to have an incorrect understanding of Jihad.

Whether we like it or not, the savage terrorist group ISIS and its sisters, such as Al-Qaeda, associate themselves with Islam. The heinous acts of terrorism that they perpetrate are supposedly done in the name of Islam. We can sit down and claim all day long that the savagery, bloodshed,

injustice, wrongdoing and all other inhumane acts they commit not only have nothing to do with Islam but are also condemned in Islam yet the fact remains is that the youth who are the lifeline of these organizations are mostly the children of Muslims.

If we want to put an end to losing our children to these terrorist organizations, we must be honest with ourselves and ask the question: Where have we gone wrong? What ideology among Muslims is responsible for resulting in a generation that is so violent, careless, mindless and savage? It turns out that two of the renowned Saudi Scholars have already responded to this question and I wanted to share their answers with the English speaking reader. It is refreshing to see that the Saudi Scholars are openly talking about this; for the realization of the problem can be half of the solution.

Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703 – 22 June 1792) was a religious cult leader in Central Arabia from a place called Najd. He was the founder of modern day salafism. However, Salafis like to claim that ‘wahabis’ is a colloquial term despite the fact their leader was called this. He was a very controversial individual who liked opposing every single Islamic figure during that time. He rejected many common Muslim practises because he regarded them either to be a religious innovation (bidah) or polytheism (shirk).

The reason Salafism spread like wildfire was thanks to the Saudi Arabian government funding publication and awareness. The reason for this was Ibn Abdul Wahhab’s pact with Muhammad bin Saud (founder of Saudi Arabia) helped to establish the Emirate of Diriyah, the first Saudi state. Thus began a dynastic alliance and power sharing arrangement between the two families which continue even today in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As you can see this ideology was setup as a power-hungry cult. The ‘Al ash-Sheikh’, Saudi Arabia’s leading religious family, are the descendents of Ibn Abdul Wahhab, and have historically lead the scholars in the Saudi state, dominating the state’s clerical institutions.

Muhammad bin Saud (d. 1765)

He is also known as Ibn Saud and was the ameer of the Diriyah and is considered the founder of the first Saudi state and the Saudi dynasty, which are technically named for his father – Saud ibn Muhammad ibn Muqrin (died 1725). He was an ambitious desert warrior.

Juhayman al Utaybi (1935-1980)

He is famous for leading the two week siege of the grand mosque of Makkah in 1979. Al-Utaybi was a leader of the Salafi society for commanding right and forbidding wrong. This group began in Medina in the mid-1960s. Initially supported by senior Saudi scholars, the groups increasingly uncompromising stances and iconoclastic worship practices eventually generated conflict with the scholarly establishment.

In the late 1970s, al-Utaybi's faction of the society rejected the Saudi state and came to believe that one of its own members was the Mahdi. This belief inspired its uprising in Makkah. Al-Utaybi's ideas directly influenced ISIS.

Hamad bin Atiq (1812/1884)

This scholar from present-day Saudi Arabia epitomised a school of thought within nineteenth-century Wahhabism that rejected any interaction between those considered to be true muslims and outsiders. This exclusive conception of Muslim identity influenced the thought of Al-Utayi and the actions of ISIS.

The majority of the world's salafis are from Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia. They are now the fastest growing group in North America and the United Kingdom. A full 46.87% of Qataris and 44.8% of Emiratis are Salafis, while 5.7% of Bahrainis are Salafis and 2.17% of Kuwaitis are Salafis.

Only 22.9% of Saudis are Salafis thus making them the 'dominant minority' in Saudi Arabia. There are 4 million Saudi Salafis who are concentrated in Najd. They all originated from here.

Prominent Salafi Saudi Scholars are confessing the link between ISIS and Salafism.

Dr Adil Al-Kalbaani (the first black Imam of Masjid-Al-Haram Makkah) admits the link in an interview:

This is a partial transcript of an interview with Dr Adil Al Kalbaani:

Journalist: You say that ISIS is a byproduct of Salafism?

Al-Kalbani: Indeed.

Journalist: How so?

Al-Kalbani: Look! Some of our brothers claim that ISIS was established by various intelligence organisations. In fact, intelligence services do not establish new ideologies but they take advantage of existing {suitable} ones. The ideology of ISIS is the ideology of Salafism. ISIS justifies its way or methodology using our books (SALAFISM). That is why you will find that most of our Salafi Brothers who criticise ISIS, only criticise their application, not their ideology. We must refute their ideology as well (but we agree with them.) Take for example the case of an apostate. We must make it clear who an apostate is, and who has the right to judge and apply the law etc. Once again, most of us criticise their savage ways of killing and bloodshed because it ruins our reputation in front of the other nations. What this means is that if they applied their ideology in a way that did not cause embarrassment to us Muslims, we would be at ease with ISIS. YES, once again, ISIS is a by-product of Salafi Teachings. It is true that there may be [foreign] intelligence services that exploit them, pave the way for them, support them with weaponry and make it easy for them to become who they are now. But they exploit what already exists in our Salafi Books in print or circulation today. There are those amongst us who adapted these ways that are present in our books but they don't come out and always express it openly. In fact, because of some specific laws, we have seen some journalists assassinated. These were in fact Salafi fatwas and no other.

Furthermore, The Salafi Preacher Adnaan Al-arur praises ISIS and affirms Kalbani's views. Al Arur says: "Ninety nine percent of our brother in ISIS are believers, Muslims, sincere people (mukhlisoon), truthful people (sadiqoon), be it inside or outside Syria, and they are to defend Islam."

Another famous Salafi scholar Dr Al-Ouni has undertaken an interview in which he confirms ISIS being a derivative of Salafism.

For a leading Salafi Imam to acknowledge the fact that Salafism caused ISIS just goes to show how extreme their views are. Moreover, Adil Kalbaani was the same person who classed suicide bombing as martyrdom.

May Allah protect us from this fitna.

Exposing the Salafi Scholars

Throughout history, the Muslims have hand thousands of scholars and they all had one thing in common – all were either muqallids or mujtahids. Those who were mujtahids still aimed to follow the imams within the principles (usool) of their selected madhab. And due to the fact that they had reached that level of Ijtihad, they were able to base their own opinions and apply legal analogy within the subsidiary (furoo) matters. We have also clarified as to why it is necessary to follow a madhab as well as do taqlid. This is necessary for every muslim so that they may understand the Quran and Sunnah and derive rulings from them. This is why Sufyan At-Thawri said:

"In conceding to the Fuqaha is our security in Deen." (Atharul Hadith, pg.117)

As we have stated previously, Salafism emerged to cause a disruption within this system. Salafis have themselves accepted the fact their aqeedah is based upon the opinions of three individuals: Nasir ud-Deen Albani , Muhammad Salih Al-Uthaymeen, Abdul Aziz bin Baz.

Despite the fact that the whole salafi agenda is against the concept of a Madhab, it seems as if they have created the 5th madhab based upon the sole opinion of three people. The madhabs of Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal were all meticulously systemised by a number of great scholars and all four imams had access to the Hadith directly from the Sahaba or the Tabieen.

What makes it seem logical to oppose the view of the consenus of the Ulama and join the perspective of a new group which create fatwas (verdicts) to suit their own schema? It's a preposterous concept.

Moreover, the opinions of their three 'esteemed' scholars differ in hundreds of different maslahs (rulings). They all differ in their rulings. So when Salafis try and debase the argument of Taqlid by creating confusion within muslims regarding the differences of Imams; they are indeed being hypocritical. Their own scholars have different rulings regarding not one; but hundreds of issues. If the imams are fallible and prone to err, then what chance does a self-taught controversial and opposing individual have? And salafis like to make people think that by doing this, Islam will be more logical.

The opponents of the four Madhabs, also known as Salafis, would have us believe that the differences between the madhabs would not exist had the madhabs all followed the Qur'an and Sunnah. In this is an insinuation that the madhabs do not necessarily follow authentic hadith. This is why when Salafis see a hadith in Bukhari, Muslim, or one of Shaykh Albani's books which contradicts a practice in a madhab, they come to the conclusion that madhabs must be wrong because they left out the saheeh hadith and followed either the opinion (ra'y) of their Imam, legal analogy (qiyaas), or a weak narration. In order to demonstrate that this is nothing more than a fallacy, Dr Sadi Kose presented a translated response to 139 questions which were put to the three most popular Salafi scholars: Al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, Al-Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen, and Al-Shaykh Al-Albaani. – This was in his book 'Who is right according to Quran and Sunnah – Albani, Uthaymeen or Ibn Baaz?

I doubt that any Salafi would surmise that all three are following the Qur'an and Sunnah incorrectly. Nonetheless, they manage to reach contradicting conclusions. Here is an example: Question 45: Does one raise his index finger during the sitting between two prostrations? Answer: Ibn Baaz: The Sunnah is not to raise the index finger during the sitting between the two prostrations. Ibn Uthaymeen: Raising the index finger is Sunnah during the sitting between the two prostration just like in tashahhud. Albani: Raising the index finger in any sitting other than the tashahhud is innovation (bid'ah). We have three different answers for one question. Who is right according to the Qur'an and Sunnah? A Saudi scholar has compiled 2 volumes on only some of the rulings in which Albani, Uthaymeen and Bin Baaz differ – even in Aqeedah!

That is only one example out of hundreds. If you want to know more regarding the differences of the salafi scholars please buy the book.

Albani is famous for contradicting everyone. Even himself. It is known among those who read Shaykh Albani's books in Arabic that he contradicts himself when grading hadith. He may grade a hadith weak in one of his books but then we will find the exact same hadith declared authentic in yet another one. Here is an example: 'Uthman (ra) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying: "Spending a day on the frontier in Allah's way is better than one thousand days in any other place." -In his editing of Al-Mishkah, Shaykh Albani said, "It is narrated with a chain containing an unknown (majhool) narrator (i.e., it is weak)." -In his Saheeh Sunan al-Nasaai, he declared it authentic (saheeh). -In his Daeef al-Jaami' he graded it weak (daeef).

Some of the learned followers of the Shaykh already know this. Once, one of them was reminded that he claimed Shaykh Albani declared a particular hadith authentic. He was then asked if he was sure if indeed that was the case; here's what he said: "Well, I have looked it up in Saheeh al-Jaami' and Shaykh Albani (may Allah have mercy on his soul) graded it as hasan (fair). I don't know if he graded it as weak elsewhere." If this is the behaviour of some of his learned followers, what are the ordinary people to do when Shaykh Alabni disagrees with himself? In the book 'when albani disagrees with himself' by Dr Sadi Kose; there are over 200 examples given which illustrate how the Shaykh contradicted himself. Who would we rather trust; a self-taught watchmaker who translates and deciphers Quran and Hadith and even confuses himself or the methodology of a Madhab?

It is hysterical to think we can trust people like these over the great Ulama of the salaf. It is also ironic that they refer to them as salafis but disregard the salaf.

If you look at their rulings within their fatwa books, it seems as if Ibn Baaz wants to make everything haram. Uthaymeen classifies almost everything as an innovation – he probably doesn't understand the actual meaning of a bidah (innovation). As there are many types of innovation – good innovation and bad innovation. Yet, they make the word 'bidah' seem to be a negative word. Despite the fact it is used predominantly to refer to a bad innovation, nevertheless it can have a positive meaning – for example: the second adhaan within jumuah prayer was an innovation (good) of Hadhrat Uthman. It seems as if Salafis don't truly understand the meaning of this term. And finally Albani, who confuses himself.

There is a compilation (called *al-Ijaz fi ba'dh ma Ikhtalafa fihi al-Albani wa ibn 'Uthaymin wa ibn Baaz)* of over 800 pages highlighting both the minor and major differences of opinion that came about from the neo-ijtihadic positions of the three most well known proponents of the modern day "Salafi" sect – namely, the three recent father figures of the movement: Nasir al-Albani (d.1999), Muhammad ibn Salih al-'Uthaymin (d.2001) and 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Baz (d.1999). All three were (and still are) held in high regard by most forms of contemporary "Salafism", which itself is a movement that has copious subdivisions and rival factions – with conflict ridden disunity ubiquitously present amongst themselves. They started out (and factions among them still continue) calling for the abandonment of the Four Sunni Schools of Islamic Law, namely, the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali Madhhabs; all of which emanated from the tangible time of the pious predecessors (al-Salaf al-Salihin), and continue to flourish vibrantly right up till this very day, all over the Muslim world, by the decree of Allah ta'ala. Indeed, most Sunni scholars and lay people are still attached to these acknowledged Madhhabs that have stood via the test of time. Most scholars, especially, since the post-Salaf period have also been linked to the adherence of these recognised Sunni Madhhabs.

Their call to abandon taqlid, which is in reality the following of, and placing trust in the qualified scholarship of the leading and recognised Madhhabs (and not simply "blind following" of random or incompetent individuals), has lead them to use the slogan: "A return to the Qur'an and the 'authentic' Sunna". This catchphrase may sound alluring to the laity who have not generally had the intense training to comprehend how major scholars of the past and present came to derive rulings (ijtihad) from the Sources of the Shari'a (Qur'an, Sunna, Ijma' and Qiyas), or the

precise and nuanced methodology (Usul) utilised by the most elite of scholars (Mujtahid Imams). Indeed, a little thought would have lead the sound mind to conclude that all the Mujtahid Imams, and their leading followers, not only had full access to the Qur'an and Sunna over time, but also had the acknowledged, qualified scholarship, academic rigour, and piety to extract rulings from the named Sources of Shari'a.

The question is – 'Was there ever a need to make an endeavour to try and reinvent the wheel, when more than 1200 years have passed since the inception of the leading Sunni Madhhabs with their affiliated scholarship, century after century?' The opponents of the Sunni Madhhabs imprudently contend that this is not only a "good idea", but something which is a must and an absolute necessity. Such a mentality thus leads to the blustering call to abandon taqlid of all the recognised Madhhabs. The natural and thought provoking question that arises for the advocates of this incongruous call is – 'Why do the very authorities you look up to so much – without much analytical verification (tahqiq) on an individual basis – have such a colossal amount of divergence of opinion (ikhtilaf) between themselves, if they are the major references and authorities who promoted this very call of adhering to the "Qur'an and Sunna" in their time?!'

The work below is by proponents linked to Salafism and so it is to be regarded as being an accurate representation of where and why these three named authorities of theirs differed on many legal questions (masa'il) as well as some matters linked to Islamic beliefs ('aqa'id). The very fact that these individuals had such a great number of differences in extracting rulings from the Sources of the Shari'a should lead to alarm bells ringing in the inquisitive readers' minds, for the simple reason that, it has never been possible to unite all Muslim scholars on just one specific, unified opinion, on every single legal question that has ever arisen in the past, or will be in need of answering in the future. This call to reject the Sunni Madhhabs and attempt to reformulate all opinions on the mantra of following the "strongest opinion" as propounded by contemporaries attached to "Salafism" is thus not only a fallacy but an abysmal failure on their part, and it is in effect a call that was non-existent, even in the time of the pious Imams from the generation of the Salaf as-Salihin.

Oftentimes we, the madhab followers, are confronted by those who describe themselves as Salafis, for not following daleel (evidence) but instead following a madhab. I have come across some who cannot even read a verse of the Qur'an without making serious mistakes, yet they claim to be able to interpret and follow the daleel.

One wonders how can someone in such a state follow and interpret daleel? Through a series of exchanges and observations, I found them to be nothing more than blind imitators of the contemporary Salafi teachers. These very teachers claim to understand, interpret, and follow the daleel all while promoting anti-madhabism. At length, I came to realize that when a young man of utmost ignorance claims to follow the daleel instead of imitating an Imam of a madhab, he is in fact insinuating that his Salafi teacher follows the daleel but the Imam's of the four madhabs don't. Thus, I wanted to find out to what extent the learned Salafis or the Salafi teachers themselves follow the daleel (evidence). What is meant by "following the daleel" is that a qualified scholar gathers, on a given subject, all the proofs and then derives a ruling following the thorough analysis of the complete body of evidence (daleel). This involves sifting through a quarter of a million hadith spread across more than three hundred hadith books as well as hundreds of volumes of books of each madhab.

One of the prominent Salafi teachers by the name of Shaykh Albani put it as follows:

"I examine the positions of the Imams (1) and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur'an and Sunna"

Thus, if we find a learned Salafi giving fatwas without knowing the positions or the evidences of the Imams, he is betraying this principle.

I selected three examples from learned Salafis, including the owner of the above quotation, to demonstrate to the reader that in fact Salafi teachers do not adhere to their own principle. If they stopped at that, we would have said that is their choice. But they go on declaring some of the practices of the madhabs as INVALID or CONTRARY to the Sunna without having looked at the evidences used by the madhabs.

So, if the Salafis themselves do not strictly follow the daleel, then why do they call the madhab followers to their way under the slogan of "Follow the Daleel from Qur'an and Sunna!"? Below is a Dialog between Shaykh Albani (who is arguably the most famous Salafi scholar) and Shaykh Bouti regarding the method Salafis use in deciphering rules and laws from the Quraan.

The Dialogue

Bouti : “What is your method for understanding the rulings of Allah? Do you take them from the Qur’an and Sunna, or from the Imams of independent ijtihad?”

Albani: “I examine the positions of the Imams and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur'an and Sunna.”

Bouti: “You have five thousand Syrian pounds that you have saved for six months. You then buy merchandise and begin trading with it. When do you pay zakat on the merchandise, after six months,
or after one year?”

Albani: [He 10 thought, and said,] “Your question implies you believe zakat should be paid
on business capital."

Bouti: “I am just asking. You should answer in your own way. Here in front of you is a library containing books of Qur’anic exegesis, hadith, and the works of the mujtahid Imams.”

Albani: [He reflected for a moment, then said,] "Brother, this is deen, and not simple matter. One could answer from the top of one’s head, but it would require thought, research, andstudy; all of which take time. And we have come to discuss something else.”

Bouti: I dropped the question and said, “All right. Is it obligatory for every Muslim to examine the evidences for the positions of the Imams, and adopt the closest of them to the Qur’an and Sunna?”

Albani: “Yes."

Bouti: “This means that all people possess the same capacity for ijtihad that the Imams of the madhhabs have; or even greater, since without a doubt, anyone who can judge the positions of the Imams and evaluate them according to the measure of the Qur’an and sunna must know more than all of them.”

Albani: [He said,] “In reality, people are of three categories: the muqallid or ‘follower of qualified scholarship without knowing the primary textual evidence (of Qur'an and hadith)’; the muttabi‘ r or ‘follower of primary textual evidence'; and the mujtahid, or scholar who can deduce rulings directly from the primary textual evidence (ijtihad). He who compares

between madhhabs and chooses the closest of them to the Qur'an is a muttabi', a follower of primary textual evidence, which is an intermediate degree between following scholarship (taqlid) and deducing rulings from primary texts (ijtihad).”

Bouti: “Then what is the follower of scholarship (muqallid) obliged to do?”

Albani: “To follow the mujtahid he agrees with."

Bouti: “Is there any difficulty in his following one of them, adhering to him, and not changing?”

Albani: “Yes there is. It is unlawful (haram).”

Bouti: “What is the proof that it is unlawful?”

Albani: “The proof is that he is obliging himself to do something Allah Mighty and Majestic has not obligated him to."

Bouti: I said, “Which of the seven canonical readings (qira’at) do you recite the Qur’an in?”

Albani: “That of Hafs."

Bouti: “Do you recite only in it, or in a different canonical reading each day.”

Bouti: “Why do you read only it when Allah Mighty and Majestic has not obliged you to do anything except to recite the Qur’an as it has been conveyed—with the total certainty of tawatur (being conveyed by witnesses so numerous at every stage of transmission that their sheer numbers obviate the possibility of forgery or alteration), from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)?”

Albani: “Because I have not had a opportunity to study other canonical readings, or recite the Qur’an except in this way.”

Bouti: “But the individual who learns the fiqh of the Shafi’i school—he too has not been able to study other madhhabs or had the opportunity to understand the rules of his religion except from this Imam.So if you say that he must know all the ijtihads of the Imams so as to go by all of them,

it follows that you too must learn all the canonical readings so as to recite in all of them. And if you excuse yourself
because you cannot, you should excuse him also. In any case, what I say is: where did you get that it is obligatory for a follower of scholarship (muqallid) to keep changing from one madhhab to another, when Allah has not obliged him to? That is, just as he is not obliged to adhere to a particular madhhab, neither is he obliged to keep changing."

Albani: "What is unlawful for him is adhering to one while believing that Allah has commanded him to do so."

Bouti: "That is something else, and is true without a doubt and without any disagreement among scholars. But is there any problem with his following a particular mujtahid, knowing that Allah has not obliged him to do that?"

Albani: "There is no problem."

Bouti: [Al-Khajnadi's] book, which you teach from, contradicts you. It says this is unlawful, in some
places actually asserting that someone who adheres to a particular Imam and no other is an unbeliever
(kafir)."

Albani: [He said,] "Where?" [and then began looking at the book, considering its texts and
expressions, reflecting on the words of the author["Whoever follows one of them in particular
in all questions is a blind, imitating, mistaken bigot, and is "among those who have divided their religion and are parties" [Qur'an 30:32]. [He said,] "By follows, he means someone who believes it legally obligatory for him to do so. The wording is a little incomplete."

Bouti: [I said,] "What evidence is there that that's what he meant? Why don't you just say the author
was mistaken?"

Albani: He insisted that the expression was correct, that it should be understood as containing an unexpressed condition [i.e. "provided one believes it is legally obligatory"], and he
exonerated the writer from any mistake in it.

Bouti: [I said,] “But interpreted in this fashion, the expression does not address any opponent or have any significance. Not a single Muslim is unaware that following such and such a particular Imam is not legally obligatory. No Muslim does so except from his own free will and choice.”

Albani: “How should this be, when I hear from many common people and some scholars that it is legally obligatory to follow one particular school, and that a person may not change to another?”

Bouti: “Name one person from the ordinary people or scholars who said that to you.” He said nothing,and seemed surprised that what I said could be true, and kept repeating that he had thought that many people considered it unlawful to change from one madhhab to another. I said, “You won’t find anyone today who believes this misconception, though it is related from the latter times of the Ottoman period that they considered a Hanafi changing from his own school to another to be an enormity. And without a doubt, if true, this was something that was complete nonsense from them; a blind, hateful bigotry.” I then said, “Where did you get this distinction between the muqallid “follower of scholarship” and
the muttabi‘ “follower of evidence”: Is there a original, lexical distinction [in the Arabic language], or
is it merely terminological?”

Albani: “There is a lexical difference.”

Bouti: I brought him lexicons with which to establish the lexical difference between the two words, and he could not find anything. I then said: “Abu Bakr (Allah be well pleased with him) said to a desert Arab who had objected to the allotment for him agreed upon by the Muslims, ‘If the Emigrants accept, you are but followers’—using the word “followers” (tab?) to mean ‘without any prerogativeto consider, question, or discuss.’” (Similar to this is the word of Allah Most High, “When those who
were followed (uttubi‘u) disown those those who followed (attaba‘u) upon seeing the torment, and
their relations are sundered” (Qur’an 2:166), which uses follow (ittiba‘) for the most basic blind imitation).
Albani: [He said,] “Then let it be a technical difference: don't I have a right to establish a
terminological usage?”

Bouti: “Of course. But this term of yours does not alter the facts. This person you term a muttabi‘ (follower of scholarly evidence) will either be an expert in evidences and the means of textual deduction from them, in which case he is a mujtahid. Or, if not an expert or unable to deduce rulings
from them, then he is muqallid (follower of scholarly conclusions). And if he is one of these on some questions, and the other on others, then he is a muqallid for some and a mujtahid for others. In any case, it is an either-or distinction, and the ruling for each is clear and plain.”

Albani: [He said,] “The muttabi is someone able to distinguish between scholarly positions and the evidences for them, and to judge one to be stronger than others. This is a level different to merely accepting scholarly conclusions.

Bouti: “If you mean,” I said, “by distinguishing between positions differentiating them according to the strength or weakness of the evidence, this is the highest level of ijtihad. Are you personally able to do this?”

Albani: “I do so as much as I can.”

Bouti: “I am aware,” I said, “that you give as a fatwas that a three fold pronouncement of divorce on a single occasion only counts as one time. Did you check, before this fatwa of yours, the positions of the Imams and their evidences on this, then differentiate between them, so to give the fatwa accordingly?

Now, ‘Uwaymir al-‘Ajlani pronounced a three fold divorce at one time in the presence of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) after he had made public imprecation against her for adultery (li‘an), saying, ‘If I retain her, O Messenger of Allah, I will have lied against her: she is [hereby] thrice divorced.’ What do you know about this hadith and its relation to this question, and
its bearing as evidence for the position of the scholarly majority [that a threefold divorce pronounced on a single occasion is legally finalized and binding] as opposed to the position of Ibn Taymiya [thata threefold divorce on a single occasion only counts as once]?”

Albani: “I did not know this hadith.”

Bouti: “Then how could you give a fatwa on this question that contradicts what the four madhhabs unanimously concur upon, without even knowing their evidence, or how strong or weak it was?

Here you are, discarding the principle you say you have enjoined on yourself and mean to enjoin on us, the principle of “following scholarly evidence (ittiba
in the meaning you have terminologically adopted.”

Albani: “At the time I didn’t own enough books to review the positions of the Imams" and their evidence.”

Bouti: “Then what made you rush into giving a fatwa contravening the vast majority of Muslims, when you hadn’t even seen any of their evidences?”

Albani: “What else could I do? I was asked and I only had a limited amount of scholarly resources.”

Bouti: “You could have done what all scholars and Imams have done; namely, say “I didn’t know,” or told the questioner the position of both the four madhhabs and the position of those who contravene them; without giving a fatwa for either side. You could have done this, or rather, this was what was obligatory for you, especially since the problem was not personally yours so as to force you to reach some solution or another. As for your giving a fatwa contradicting the consensus (ijma‘) of the four Imams without knowing—by your own admission—their evidences, sufficing yourself with the agreement in your heart for the evidences of the opposition, this is the very utmost of the kind of bigotry you accuse us of.”

Albani: “I read the Imams’ opinions in [Nay/ al-awtar, by] Shawkani, Subul al-salam [by al- Amir al-San‘ani], and Fiqh al-sunna by Sayyid Sabiq.”

Bouti: These are the books of the opponents of the four Imams on this question. All of them speak from one side of the question, mentioning the proofs that buttress their side. Would you be willing to judge one litigant on the basis of his words alone, and that of his witnesses and relatives?”

Albani: I see nothing blameworthy in what I have done. I was obliged to give the questioneran answer, and this was as much as I was able to reach with my understanding."

Bouti: "You say you are a "follower of scholarly evidence (muttabi")" and we should all be likewise. You have explained "following evidence" as reviewing the positions of all madhhabs, studying their evidences, and adopting the closest of them to the correct evidence—while in doing what you have done, you have discarded the principle completely. You know that the unanimous consensus of the
four madhhabs is that a threefold pronouncement of divorce on one occasion counts as a three fold, finalized divorce, and you know that they have evidences for this that you are unaware of, despitewhich you turn from their consensus to the opinion that your personal preference desires. Were you certain beforehand that the evidence of the four Imams deserved to be rejected?"

Albani: No; but I wasn't aware of them, since I didn't have any reference works on them."

Bouti: "Then why didn't you wait? Why rush into it, when Allah never obligated you to do anything of the sort? Was your not knowing the evidences of the scholarly majority a proof that Ibn Taymiya was right? Is the bigotry you wrongly accuse us of anything besides this?"
Albani: "I read evidences in the books available to me that convinced me. Allah has not enjoined me to do more than that."

Bouti: "If a Muslim sees a proof for something in a the books he reads, is that a sufficient reason todisregard the madhhabs that contradict his understanding, even if he doesn't know their evidences?"

Albani: "It is sufficient."

Bouti: "A young man, newly religious, without any Islamic education, reads the word of Allah Most High "To Allah belongs the place where the sun rises and where it sets: wherever you turn, there is the countenance of Allah. Verily, Allah is the All-encompassing, the All-knowing (Qur'an 2:115), and gathers from it that a Muslim may face any direction he wishes in his prescribed prayers, as the
apparent meaning of the verse implies. But he has heard that the four Imams unanimously concur upon the necessity of his facing towards the Kaaba, and he knows they have evidences for it thathe is unaware of. What should he do when he wants to pray? Should he follow his

conviction fromthe evidence available to him, or follow the Imam who unanimously concur on the contrary of what he has understood?”

Albani: “He should follow his conviction.”

Bouti: “And pray towards the east for example. And his prayer would be legally valid?”

Albani: “Yes. He is morally responsible for following his personal conviction.”

Bouti: “What if his personal conviction leads him to believe there is no harm in making love to his neighbor’s wife, or to fill his belly with wine, or wrongfully take others’ property: will all this be mitigated in Allah’s reckoning by “personal conviction”?

Albani: [He was silent for a moment, then said,] “Anyway, the examples you ask about are all fantasies that do not occur.”

Bouti: “They are not fantasies; how often the like of them occurs, or even stranger. A young man without any knowledge of Islam, its Book, its sunna, who happens to hear or read this verse by chance, and understands from it what any Arab would from its outward purport, that there is no harm in someone praying facing any direction he wants—despite seeing people’s facing towards the Kaaba
rather than any other direction. This is an ordinary matter, theoretically and practically, as long as there are those among Muslims who don’t know a thing about Islam. In any event, you have pronounced
upon this example—imaginary or real—a judgment that is not imaginary, and have judged “personal conviction” to be the decisive criterion in any event. This contradicts your differentiating people into three groups: followers of scholars without knowing their evidence (muqallidin), followers of scholars’ evidence (muttabi‘in), and mujtahids."
Albani: “Such a person is obliged to investigate. Didn’t he read any hadith, or any other Qur’anic verse?”

Bouti: He didn’t have any reference works available to him, just as you didn’t have any when you gave your fatwa on the question of [threefold] divorce. And he was unable to read anything otherthan this verse connected with facing the qibla and its obligatory character. Do you still insist that hemust follow his personal conviction and disregard the Imams’ consensus?”

Albani: “Yes. If he is unable to evaluate and investigate further, he is excused, and it is enough for him to rely on the conclusions his evaluation and investigation lead him to.”

Bouti: “I intend to publish these remarks as yours. They are dangerous, and strange.”

Albani: “Publish whatever you want. I’m not afraid.”

Bouti: “How should you be afraid of me, when you are not afraid of Allah Mighty and Majestic, utterly discarding by these words the word of Allah Mighty and Majestic [in Sura al-Nahl] ‘Ask those who recall if you know not’ (Qur’an 16:43).”

Albani: “My brother,” [he said,] “These Imams are not divinely protected from error (ma'sum). As for the Quranic verse that this person followed [in praying any direction], it is the word of Him Who Is Protected from All Error, may His glory be exalted. How should he leave the divinely protected and attach himself to the tail of the non-divinely-protected?”

Bouti: “Good man, what is divinely protected from error is the true meaning that Allah intended by saying, “To Allah belongs the place where the sun rises and where it sets”— not the understanding of the young man who is as far as can be from knowing Islam, its rulings, and the nature of its Qur’an. That is to say, the comparison I am asking you to make is between two understandings: the understanding of this ignorant youth, and the understanding of the mujtahid Imams, neither of which is divinely protected from error, but one of which is rooted in ignorance and superficiality, and theother of which is rooted in investigation, knowledge, and accuracy.”

Albani: “Allah does not make him responsible for more than his effort can do.”

Bouti: “Then answer me this question. A man has a child who suffers from some infections, and is under the care of all the doctors in town, who agree he should have a certain medicine, and warn his father against giving him an injection of penicillin, and that if he does, he will be exposing the child’s life to destruction. Now, the father knows from having read a medical publication that penicillin helps in cases of infection. So he relies on his own knowledge about it, disregards the advice of the doctors since he doesn’t know the proof for what they say, and employing instead his own personal conviction,

treats the child with a penicillin injection, and thereafter the child dies. Should
such a person be tried, and is he guilty of a wrong for what he did, or not?”
Albani: [He thought for a moment and then said,] “This is not the same as that.”

Bouti: “It is exactly the same. The father has heard the unanimous judgment of the doctors, just as the young man has heard the unanimous judgment of the Imams. One has followed a single text he read in a medical publication, the other has followed a single text he has read in the Book of Allah Mighty and and Majestic. This one has gone by personal conviction, and so has that.”

Albani: “Brother, the Qur’an is light. Light. In its clarity as evidence, is light like any other words?”

Bouti: “And the light of the Qur’an is reflected by anyone who looks into it or recites it, such that he understands it as light, as Allah meant it? Then what is the difference between those who recall
[Qur’an 16:43] and anyone else, as long as all partake of this light? Rather, the two above examples are comparable, there is no difference between them at all; you must answer me: does the person investigating—in each of the two examples—follow his personal conviction, or does he follow and
imitate specialists?”

Albani: “Personal conviction is the basis.”

Bouti: “He used personal conviction, and it resulted in the death of the child. Does this entail any responsibility, moral or legal?”

Albani: “It doesn’t entail any responsibility at all.”

Bouti: I said, “Then let us end the investigation and discussion on this last remark of yours, sinceit closes the way to any common ground between you and me on which we can base a discussion.It is sufficient that with this bizarre answer of yours, you have departed from the consensus of the entire Islamic religion. By Allah, there is no meaning on the face of the earth for disgusting bigotry if it is not what you people have” (pages 134-148).

Bouti concludes the story by saying: I do not know then, why these people don't just let us be, to use our own "personal conviction" that someone ignorant of the rules of religion and the proofs for them must adhere to one of the mujtahid Imams, imitating him because of the latter's being more aware than himself of the Book of Allah and sunna of His messenger. Whatever the mistake in this opinion in their view let it be given the general amnesty of "personal conviction." like the example of him who turns his back to the qibla and is his prayer is valid, or him who kills a child and the killing is "ijtihad" and "medical treatment"

Was Shaykh Albani Faithful to his Declared Principle?
During the dialog with Dr. Bouti, Shaykh Al-Albani advertised his methodology as such:
"I examine the positions of the Imams and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur'an and Sunna."

Yet, several minutes into the dialog, we saw that even though Shaykh Al-Albani had issued a fatwa regarding divorce, he admitted that he wasn't familiar with the hadith used by the four madhabs. In this case, it was the same hadith that all four madhabs relied upon. This means had Shaykh AI-AIbani checked out the books of any of the four schools, he would have known about this hadith. We find that those who follow in the footsteps of Shaykh Al-Albani betray this very principle again and again. These people have forgotten the roots of Islam and are now starting to belittle great Ulama like Imam Abu Hanifa. This is truly absurd.

Some of the controversial claims by Salafi scholars

1) Abdur Rahman Ibn Al-Khaliq

 Al-Albani's student and deputy in Kuwait has called tasawuff (purification) a disgrace despite it even being practised by Ibn Taymiyyah. In his book he considers people who practise tasawuff to be free-thinking heretics and lawless esotericists astray in misguidance. Dr Said Al Bouti called it 'an exercise in calumny'. Sayyid Yusuf al-Rifai wrote his book in refutation of his claims. In a televised debate with the latter, Abd Al Khaliq went as far as to accuse Sayyid Ahmad Al-Badawi the Qutb Of Egypt who died over centuries ago, of never having prayed two rakahs in his life. He was praised and encouraged by scholars like Shaykh Abdul Aziz ibn Baz upon the publication of his doctrine. He was attacked by other salafi scholars as being an innovater ie. (Shaykh rabi ibn

Hadi Al-Madkhali) Ibn Baaz called his work ‘a clarification of the salafi aqeedah’.

2) Muhammad Ahmad Abd Al-Salam

He wrote a book attacking those people who prayer Salat al-Duha and Salat al-Awabin which “Salafis” and ‘Wahabis’ reject as spurious despite solid proofs not only among the texts but also in the general agreement of the elite of this Umma. His book was refuted by the Syrian Shaykh Abdul Qadir Isha Diab in his book.

3) Bakr Ibn Abd Allah Abu ZAyd

One of the Saudi protégés of Hamid Al-Ansari, Bakr Abu Zayd makes the following claims.

- He claims that the early historians and chroniclesd of battles and Seera do not use the term Madina Al Munawwara yet Imam Ahmad narrates that our liegelord ANas said that when the prophet first entered the city it became illuminated. The term itself is used by Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al Qayyim and Ibn kathir.
- He claims that wiping the face after the supplication is illicit in Law yet it is authentically related from Hadhrat Umar and his son Abdullah Ibn Al Zubayr as well as Hasan al Basri (d.110), the Tabiee Ubayd in Umayr ibn Qatada, Abu Kaab Al-Basri, Maamar ibn Rashid al-Azdi (d.153) Abdul Razzaq (d.211) Ishaq ibn Rahuyah (d.238) Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.241) as well as Abu Muhammad al Juwayni, Ibn Abd Al-Hadi and Imam al-Nawawi. Ibn Hajar in the chapter of Bulugh Al-Maram (wiping the face) said that the narrations related to the prophet to its illicitness, even if individually weak, collectively attain the rank of ‘fair’ – that is, authentic Shaykh Abu Ghudda said; “This is frank evidence to the effect that wiping the face with the two hands after raising them in supplication was practised in the first two generations.” The massive majority of the Umma and their scholars agree on the licitness of wiping the face after dua. All this makes it a sunnah while this man makes it a bidah.
- He claims that carrying or using dhikr-beads/tasbeeh is an innovation and goes to inordinate lengths to misrepresent as inauthentic the numerous authentic Prophetic, Companion, and Succesor reports, establishing that it is a sunna. He acknowledges that Imam Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani was never seen without his dhikr beads in his hand, then exclaims that this proves nothing!

- He attempts to prove that the narrations cursing the women who visit graves to set up places of worship and candles in fact means that all women who visit graves are cursed, and he does his best to weaken the narrations showing that Aisha and Fatima did visit graves, all to stop women from visitng al-Baqi and the Holy Prophet in Madina Munawara.

4) Nasir Ibn Nuh Al-Albani

Albani is the arch-innovator of the Wahabis and Salafis in our time. A watch repairman by trade, al-Albani is a self taught claimant to hadith scholarship who has no known teacher in any one of the Islamic sciences and has admitted not to have memorised the book of Allah nor any book of hadith, fiqh, aqida, usool, or grammar. He has no sanad (chain) allowing him to teach any hadith books. He achieved fame by attacking the great scholars of Islam and reviling the science of Fiqh with especial malice towards the school of his father Shaykh Nuh, a Hanafi jurist of the generation. His father was expelled from Syria then Saudi Arabia and lived in Amaan,Jordan under house arrest until his death in 1999.

Albani does not consider Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab to be ‘salafi enough’. In his book he states:

“Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab was like a common man when it came to Hadith and had no knowledge of sound or weak Hadith. Among the proofs of this is that he authored a letter which is in print and in use amongst his Najdi followers of this day, he began with the hadith.... “The messenger of Allah whenever he came out of his house to the mosque, would say: ‘O Allah, I am asking You by the right those who ask You have over You and by the right of this walking of mine’.” To the end of the Hadith, without indicating that it is weak.

This was the reason Albani give to disassociate himself with Wahabism and allow himself to be the spotlight of Salafism by claiming that a hadith was ‘weak’. However, this Hadith is actually a ‘hasan’ hadith according to Shaykh Mahmud Mamduh – who has scrutinised the chain meticulously. Unlike Albani who sometimes classifies a hadith as weak and other times as authentic whenever he feels like doing so.

Over 35 Scholars (including Salafis) have written books on his mistakes. They have compiled volumes and volumes in refutation

of his claims. Is this the man you would follow instead of the four Imaams? (see Albani and his friends by Shaykh Gibril Fouad Hadad)

Among Albani's Innovations in Religion:

- In his book Adab-al-Zafaf he prohibits women from wearing gold jewelry – bracelets,rings and chains – despite the consenus of the Ulama permitting it.
- In his book Tamam al-Minna (p. 363-368) he claims that 2.5% zakah is not due on money obtained from commerce, i.e. The main activity whereby money circulates amongst Muslims. The Wahhabi Abdullah ibn Jibrin said: "I know of no-one who broke the consensus on this issue before al-Albani."
- In many tapes of his he absoloutely prohibits fasting on Saturdays although the prophet recommended not to fast on Fridays except if one fasts the next day or day before. Albani's own followers confess no one ever said such a thing before him.
- He prohibits and declares itikaaf in any but the Three mosques Invalid in his book Qiyaam Ramadhan whereas it is an emphasised collective sunnah for the Muslims in every locality of the world in the last ten days of Ramadhan.
- In Tashbih Hadith Iftar al Saim (1960) he claims that it is lawful to eat in Ramadhan before Maghrib as defined by the Law, and similarly after the true dawn as long as one intends travel.
- He compares Hanafi fiqh to the Gospel in his commentary on al-Mundhiri.
- He calls people to imitate him rather than the Imams of the Salaf such as the founders of the Four Schools and his followers invalidate the hadiths that contradict his views.
- He calls people to imitate him rather than the Imams of the Salaf such as the founders of the Four Schools and his followers invalidate the hadiths that contradict his views
- In al-Hawi li-Fatawa al-Albani, he prohibits the make up performance of prayers missed intentionally (QADHA)

whereas the prophet said the repayment of the debt owed to Allah comes first.

- He claims in Tamam al-Minna (p.107) that it is permissible for menstruating women and those in a state of major defilement (junub) to recite, touch and carry the Quraan.
- He claims over and over that among the innovations in religion existent in Madinah is the persistence of the Prophet's grave in the mosque, for example in his Manasik al-Hajj Page 61
- He claims in his same book that whosever travels intending to visit the prophet or to ask him for his intercession is a misguided innovator.
- He claims in his Silsila Daifa that whoever carries tasbeeh/dhikr beads in his hand to remember Allah is misguided and and innovating.
- created a location for Allah above the throne which he calls the 'non-existent place'. (introduction to Imam Dhahabi's al-Uluw)
- He claims in Tamam al Minna that masturbation leading to ejaculation does not annul one's fast. He repeats this claim in al-hawi min fatwa al-albani.
- He published his own editions of Sahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari and claimed that he "corrected" them.
- He claims that you do not have to be pure to touch the Mushaf. (Tamam al-Minna page 107)
- He suggests that Imam Bukhari is a Kaafir for interpreting the Tafsir of an ayah different from his own opinion of the meaning.
- In his notes on the Tahawiyyah, he denies the name of the angel of death to be Azrail even though his best friend Ibn Baaz names Azrail in his fatwa.
- He does takfeer on 90% of the Ummah for not having the same anthropomorphist views as him.
- In at least five of his books he calls for the demolition of the Green Dome of the prophet's mosque in al-Madina al-

Munawarra and for asks to take the prophets grave outside the mosque.

- He refutes the fact that the prophet is alive in his grave. Even though this confirmed through so many Ahadith and from the statements of the Salaf.
- He considers it an innovation to visit relatives, neighbours and friends on the day of Eid and he prohibits it.
- He weakens the hadith of Sahih Muslim many times.
- Scholars have produced books with over 3000 of his mistakes.
- In the Jordanian newspaper Al-Liwa on Juy 7 1993 (page 16) he gave the fatwa that Muslims should hand over Palestine to the Jews as it is part of the Abode of war. Dr Salah al-Khalidi called him a semite, Habib Ahmad Mashur al Haddad called him a Jew, and the Jordanian deputy Dr Ali al Faqir called him a Shaytan. Dr Muhammad Said al Bouti wrote a whole article refuting him.
- In his 1965 Book Salat-at-Tarawih he prohibits praying more than 11 Rakaahs in Taraweeh prayers on the grounds that he believed the prophet never prayed more. However, this claim was refuted such as Shaykh Muhammad Salih Al-Khatib and Shaykh Ismail Al-Ansari.
- He declares that adding more to the 11 nafil prayers of Tahajjud is an innovation rather than an act of reward.
- He considers it an innovation to pray four rakaahs between the two adhans of Jumuaah and before Salah although it is authentically narrated that the prophet prayed four rakaahs before Jumuah and four rakaahs after it. The Ulama of Damascus and Allepo republished a fatwa against his claim.
- He declares it Haram to lengthen the beard over a fistful’s length although there is no proof for such a claim in the whole law and none of the Ulama have ever said this before him. Even Ibn Baaz considers it permissible as well as Uthaymeen.

- He is well known for his heinous words which he uses against the scholars of the muslim community. Hasan Ali al Saqaat has even compiled a dictionary of the words he uses.
- He expresses hatred to those who read Imam Al-Busiri's masterpiece Qasidah Burdah. i.e. millions of muslims past and present including the likes of Imams Ibn Hajar, al Sakhawi and al-Suyuti all included it as a required reading in the Islamic curriculm.
- He gave the fatwa (as did Salih al Fawzan) that whoever invokes prayer on the prophet out loud when the Khatib recites {Lo! Allah and his angels send salutations on the prophet, O you who believe! Make salutations upon him and salute him with worthy salutations} (33:56), commits innovation and his Jumuah Salah is invalidated. Rather in such a case the ruling is that your allowed as long as your quiet according to Imam Awzai, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Tahawi, Ibn Hazm (an inspiration for salafis also), the Shafiis and Ibn Taymiyyah.
- He declared Hadiths within Sahih Muslim to be weak and was refuted. (Silsila Daifa)
- In al-Hawi min Fatwa Al-Albani he calls the act of qunut in the fajr prayer an innovation although it is established that the prophet did it.
- Albani in his fatwa (pg 318) declares it impermissible to say in the Talbiya other than what the Prophet said, nameky, "Labbayka Allahuma Labbayk, Labbayka la Sharika laka Labbaykh Innal Hamda walniamata laka wal mulk, la sharika la." And he rejects it as impermissible to say what Hadharat Umar added: "Labbayka Allahuma Labbayk, Labbayka wasa'dayk, wal khayru fi yadayk, labbayka wal raghbau ilayka wal-amal." Although none of the Ulama prohibited the latter formula before him since it is among the excellent innovations in Islam and the prophet himself commanded us to follow the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs."

Al Qurtubi said: "One of the knowers of Allah said: A certain group that has not yet come up in our time but shall show up at the end of time, will curse the scholars and insult the jurists." Imam Ahmad Mashur al-Haddad said about Al-albani: "He shall die following the Jewish religion."

Years before Albani gave his notorious fatwa for Muslims to exit Palestine.

After all this, Al-Albani is regarde as “the leading authority in the science of Hadith” by Shaykh Abdul Aziz Ibn Baz.

5) Hammad Al Nasiri

According to Shaykh Yusuf ar-Rifai he is “the defunct Shaykh of the antropormophists in Medina and a venal mercenary from Mali.” He added Wahabi connotations to the pure Hanbali Fiqh. He has also surprisingly declared that “It is impossible to understand the Quran and Sunnah without the Madhahib.” At his hands, other extreme individuals such as Abdullah ibn Jibrin, Bakr Abu Zayd and Rabi ibn Hadi Al-Madhkali, Ali al Fuqayhi and Salih al Suhaymi. He is also famous for promoting the destruction of the green dome in Medina. He also claimed that Salatul Tasbih is false as well as weaking a hadith which was transmitted from over 30 companions – “May Allah brighten the face of him who hears my hadith and conveys it as he heard it.”

6) Abdur Rahman Saeed Dimashqiyya

A Riyadh funded Lebanese author of poor scholarship who pubished a few books. In one of his books he apologised for the behaviour of Ibn Taymiyyah. Despite apologising for him providing a direction for Allah – he himself showed anthropomorphist views.

7) Muhammad Khalil Harras

Characterised by one of his Azhari colleagues (our teacher Dr Nur al Din) as “a second rate student disesteemed by his teachers and peers”; Muhammad Khalil Harras has been classed as ignorant by fellow salafis and even his admirer Albani has said that he lacked sufficient skill. He also showed anthropomorphic views.

8) Abd Al Aziz Ibn Abdullah Ibn Baz

The late (1999) nascient mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, government scholar par excellence and major innovator whose influence on spreading deviant beliefs is incalculable. The present crippling of Islam and Muslims took place under his leadership and as a direct result of his policies as listed by Sayyid Yusuf Ar-Rifaai in Nasiha li-Ikhawanina Ulama-e-Najd:

- Calling the Muslims ‘pagans’.

- Calling the Muslims ‘apostates’
- Calling the Muslims ‘deviants’.
- Calling the Muslims ‘innovators’.
- Shutting the Mosque in Madinah at Night
- Imposing the style of Najd in Azaan
- Monopolizing teaching in Madina and Makkah
- Obstructing and Scolding Women in Medina
- Posting Hoodlums at the Noble Grave
- Blocking Women from visiting Baqi
- Police Interrogation Centers.
- Razing of the mosque of Abu Bakr.
- Destruction of our historical vestiges
- Falsifying our scholarly heritage.
- Libelling Ulema who disagree with Wahhabi doctrine
- Replacing Khadijah’s House with Latrines
- Outlawing Naseehah to Rulers

As former overall president of the directorships of scholarly research, ifta, dawah and irshaad, Ibn Baaz is on record for issuing a fatwa declaring as unislamic the Palestinian people’s uprising against the Jewish state of Israel, whereas he never condemned the practises, in his own country, of gambling, horse-racing, and usury.

In the late sixties he declared any and all forms of cooperation with the kuffar prohibited and cast a judgement of apostasy on Abd al Nasir fpr employing a civilian force of a few hundred Russian engineers to build the Aswan Dam. In the early nineties he switched and made it halal for kufr forces to come, under their flag and sovereignty, in hundreds and thousands, to occupy Muslim lands and destroy Iraq because of the so called ‘neccesity’. There was no problem for them to stay once the ‘necessity’ was over. Isn’t that just hypocritical? As we talked about before, people (when not following a madhab) will twist the rules in order

to issue a verdict in their favour. Imagine the state of the world if everyone did this.

When the Americans landed a man on the moon he issued a fatwa (Sahaaban 1389/1969) which he then expanded later. He asserted within this fatwa that whoever says the earth moves on its axis has commited disbelief, gone astray and must be summoned to repent or else be killed as an apostate disbeliever and his property be seized as spoils for the Muslim treasury." This caused a problem for the Muslim community. Ibn Baaz used his own personal beliefs to get in the way of everyones Aqeedah. He manipulated his position and he showed such an extreme stance. Salafis who say ISIS is not their fault just have to look at their authorities to see how radical the concept of Salafism is.

Ibn Baaz also showed antropormorphist views and claims that allah is literally sat on his throne as well as associating allah with literal body parts. He also explicitly attributes a geographical location for Allah.

He has also made the claim that travelling in order to visit the prophets grave is an innovation. Yet there is an authentic hadith to refute this – this topic of antroporphism, location, corporality, tawasuf, tawasul will all be discussed later.

He declares masah over woollen socks as permissible despite this action being not permissible by the consensus of the ummah and the four madhabs.

Under Ibn Baaz, through the power of flashy publishing, worldwide distributinon and unlimited financing, "Salafi" and Wahaabi books previously condemned by the muslim world as anthromorphist and heretical were recirculated and/or translated. He also helped financially setup a famous company called Darrusalam which distribute tons of salafi publications.

Some of the many absurd claims he made within his kitabs

- Stating that Imam Abu Hanifa could be a kafir due to him ascribing to the Ashari creed
- Stating that Abu Jahl has greater understanding of the kalima than muslim ulema.
- Stating: "The disbelievers who know their disbelief are better-guided than the believers."

- Stating: “Among the polytheists are those who love Allah with a tremendous love.”
- Accusing a sahabi of shirk – see Hanafi Fiqh Youtube Channel for more information regarding this.
- Giving a Fatwa saying that the earth is flat and whoever opposes his judgement regarding this is an atheist deserving of punishment.
- Stating: “The Muslim was named a worshipper of the dinar and dirham.”
- Showing undisguised loathing of the Awliya, the Ulama and the generality of the Believers: “Conditions decayed to the point that, amongst most, worshipping the monks is the best deed and is called sainthood (wilaya), whilst worshipping the doctors of the law is ‘knowledge’ and ‘jurisprudence’.”
- Stating that “the two opposites {belief and disbelief] can be found in a single heart” in contradiction of the verse [Allah has not assigned onto any man two hearts within his body] (33:4). This and the previous four concepts are fundamental to understand the Salafi propogation of mutual suspicion among Muslims.
- Stating that allah explicitly said to have two hands: the right holds the heaven and the other holds the earth, and the other is explicitly named the left hand.
- Claming that “Allah has a body, unlike bodies.”
- He attributes shirk to majority of the ummah – “Presently all kinds of shirk (both the ancient and new ones) are rampangt among Muslims. What the prophet prophesised earlier seems to be coming true now. For instance, the Muslims are treating Prophets, saints, Imams and martyrs etc. polytheistically.”

 The attribution of shirk to the majority of the Umma is an unmistakable signituare of the heresy of the Khawarij, who did not hesitate to brand as mushrik the rank and life of the Muslims – including the Rightly-guided Caliphs. As for the prophesies related to polytheism at the end of time, they pertain to the very last phase of major sin before rising of the hour. Such does not occur until after the killing of the Dajjal at the hands of Isa (pbuh) followed by his death and the disappearance of all believers from the face of the earth. Until then, the prophet (PBUH) said that his Ummah was protected against error and that his greatest fear for us was not

shirk but worldly competition and scholarly impostors. Thus the charge that “Muslims are treating prophets, saints, Imams and martyrs polytheistically is unsupported and is overwhelmingly false. In fact this change is only a camouflage of the very disrespect of Prophets and Saints for which Wahhabism and its sectarian offshoots stand.

- He goes on to say: “If a person calls upon someone (by invoking his name) other than Allah, while doing his everyday routine chores, so that the one called upon may help him obviate his distress, or attacks an enemy by invoking his name, or keeps pronouncing his name on the beads of a rosary..... All the above things and acts prove the presence of the elements of Shirk... by nursing this kind of faith, a man undoubtedly turns into a Mushrik.”

 This claim just goes to show how extreme his views are. He is accusing almost every single person on the face of the earth of commiting shirk.

- Ibn Baaz talks with absoloutely no respect when talking about the messengers, angels or scholars. For example: “We must understand that anyone – whether one of the most eminent human beings or any of the angels dearest and nearest to Allah – does not carry the status of even a shoe-maker in terms of frivolity and disgrace, while facing the magnificence of the Divinity.”

 This kind of coarse disparagement of the prophets and the angels is kufr passible of death according to most of the Salaf – whether uttered ostensibly in the cause of Tawhid or in that of atheism – and further lies in blatant contradiction of countless verses of the glorious Quran extolling the high rank of the prophets and angels in the divine presence.

- The statement in which he says: “In case someone recognises a prophet to have the knowledge of the unknown such a person becomes a mushriks.” This mad fatwa idolaters of the entire Ummah since a Muslim necessarily confesses the prophets knowledge of the unknown, beginning with the companion such as Hassan ibn Thabit who said:

 A prophet who sees around him what others do not

 And recites the book of Allah in every assembly!

 If he says something of a a day which he has not yet seen

 What he says is confirmed on the morrow of the next day

And Malik Ibn Awf said:

I never saw anyone nor heard anyone in all mankind like Muhammad. Without stint he gave lavishly to all and when you wished he told you what happens tomorrow.

We can come to learn that the Salafis tactics to propagate their agenda

a) Salafis conceal themselves in anonymity to accuse Muslims.

b) They misuse Quran against Muslims.

c) They forge baseless rulings of Kufr

d) They quote only in part, in order to convey the opposite of what is meant

e) They change the wording of the Quran to pass anthropormorphism for Islamic belief.

f) The mujassima (people who do tajseem) accuse the muslims of tajseem (creating a body for Allah).

g) They deny the impendency of the last day

h) They deny the equality of all human beings in creation.

i) They deny the status of prophets as being higher than a normal person.

j) They deny that intercession may save one from the fire by divine permission.

k) They believe that no knowledge of Islam is hidden from them.

l) They quote quran against hadith.

Conclusion: Warn others of the Salafis.

9) Shaykh Muhammad Masoomee Al Khajnadee

He compiled a book questioning whether it was necessary to follow a madhab called – “Should a muslim follow a particular madhab.” The book is disgraceful and full of lies. It uses quran ayahs regarding firawn and polytheists in order to debase the

arguement of taqlid. It is a pathetic attempt to support salafi propaganda and due to the ignorance of many people it is accepted and utilised by many Salafis.

10) Abu Bakr Jabir Al-Jazairi.

The late Algerian who fled the country at time Algeria was in the throes of Jihad against the French occupants and settled in Saudi Arabia – which he described as “Islam’s representative, the state which is the miracle of the 14th century, which only a believer defends and a hypocrite and disbeliever opposes, as long as it stands for Allah’s command.” And where he was promoted to the post of Teacher in the mosque of the prophet in Medinah. There, he sat attacking the prophet, the sufis (those who practise tasawuff {purification}) and the saints, repeating and shouting at the top of his lungs, right next to the prophet (pbuh): “The father and the mother of the prophet are in hellfire!” For this act alone al-Jazari deserves to be severely punished. His books received a lot of fame and were heavily marketed by Wahabi/Salafi sponsors

This is the very same person who claims that his tafseer and stance of salafi belief is gonna be the saviour of deen. He completely disregarded the pious predeccesors by claiming that he was the saviour.

11) Muhammad Ibn Abd al Rahman AL Khumaayis

Another self-taught salafi ambassador who tried to refute Imam Abu Hanifa but fell flat on his face after being rebutted by the likes of Imam Kawthari.

12) Al- Madkhali Mahmud Abdul Rauf al-Qasim

Like Dimashqiya, an unknown whose claim to fame in is a 1993 book written against the concept of tasawuf. He was later refuted by the late Dr Abdul Qadir Isa in his 700 page book Haqaiq an al-tasawuff.

13) Rabi Ibn Hadi Al-Madkhali

Another graduate of the universities of Medina and Umm al Qura where he studied under Albani and Bin Baz among others and acquired pretensions of hadith scholarship. He spent most of his time

advocating the Salafi movement. He is against the idea of Tabligh (dawah) and has shown strong resentment towards it and the people that do it. He targets against the Azhari Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali with a passion. In his books, he has regarded and ranked Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, Bin Baz, Albani, Khalil Harras and Muhammad Al-Fiqqi as amongst 'true imams of Islam and Sunnah'. Doesn't Salafism sound like a 5th madhab made out of ignorant and unlearned self-taught scholars? Like most Salafis, he shows hatred towards great scholars such as Imam Kawthari.

14) Muhammad Al-Qahtani

Al-Qahtani is an Umm al-Qura university graduate and an author. He is responsible for the re-edition and re-circulation of a compilation of antropormorphist forgeries attributed to Imam Ahmad bin Hambal.

15) Mashhur Hassan Salman

One of the most industrious and skillfull of this list, Hassan Salman has compiled a book refuting Imam An-Nawawi. This book is three hundred pages in which he casts aspersions on Imam An-Nawawi's explanations of the Hadiths of Sahih Muslim. The reason he is against these explanations is because Masshur Hassan Salman holds anthropomorphist views which Imam An-Nawawi had refuted

16) Muhammaad Al-Shuqayri

He wrote a book titled 'al-Sunna wal-Mubtadaat in which he violated the most elementary rules of the Arabic language and displayed thorough ignorance of the meanings of Sunnah and Bidah. He showed blind fanatic and attacked the scholars of the community as innovators on the misconceived basis of the hadith of the prophet in bidah. He was refuted by Sayyid Abdullah Mahfuz Al-Haddad in his book al Sunna wal-Bidaa in which latter adduces more than three hundred and fifty narrations of the prophet and the companions illustrating the Sunni understanding of Sunnah and Bidaah.

17) Hamd Ibn Abdul Muhsin Al-Tuwayjiri

He is the mufti who demanded that women caught driving in Saudi Arabia be labelled as prostitutes in lawcourts. In his book in support of anthropomorphism he actually quotes the book of Genesis – “We shall create man in our image and likeness.”

18) Muhammad Salih Al-Uthaymeen

Ibn Baz’s late (d.2001) long-time second fiddle and his heir and successor in strange and unusual rulings. He made the following statements in his fatawa:

1) He claims that whoever believes in the concept of tawassul is an apostate.

2) He states: “We must not call the messenger habibullah (the beloved of allah) but only khalilullah (the intimate friend of Allah)” in his fatawa. In other words, al-Shaabi was mistaken to say, whenever narrating from Aisha: “The truthful woman, daughter of the Siddiq and beloved of the beloved of Allah, narrated to me....”

3) He says that Allah is literally everywhere as well as literally being on the throne.

4) He states: “We should not ask the Prophet (pbuh) to ask forgiveness for us because the deeds of a human being end the moment he dies and he cannot even ask forgiveness for himself.” Shaykh Mamduh called this statement ‘impudent’ and ‘a blunder’ and refuted it in Raf al Minara (p. 81-86)

5) Like the rest of the Salafis Uthaymeen adopts anthropomorphism by asserting ‘two-eyes’ for the Most High and Exalted in his commentary of Ibn Taymiyyah’s Sharhul Aqeedatul Wasatiyya

6) He uses a simile to describe Allah is like the sun as its rays reaches us despite being in the sky. This unprecedented innovation was examined at length elsewhere.

7) Uthaymin claimed that Imam Al-Busiri’s classic Qasidah Al-Burdah contains passages that constitute Shirk. Shaykh Isa al-Himyari refuted him and Imam Kawthari also refuted this claim that was made prior by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab.

8) He gives Allah body parts such as feet,eyes and shins in an explicit manner which is almost detrimental to one’s iman to contemplate it.

19) Muqbal Ibn Hadi Al-Wadi

An ex-Zaydi who studied in Najd then Makkah where adopted every aspects of Salafism from the US and Europe.

Al Wadi claims that Sahih Hadith other than Al-Bukhari and Muslim can be counted on the fingers of one's hand – a claim that it takes, indeed, only a child to refute. He was banned by his own friends from teaching due to being disrespectful. Wadi settled for Ibn Baz, Albani, Hammad al-Ansari, Yahya ibn Uthman and Muhammad ibn Abdullah as teachers.

Both his admirers and he himself agree his works are filled with mistakes. He considers the place of Najd to be on the same rank as Makkah and Medina. His fawning imitators perfected the fraud b dubbing him 'Imam' and 'the muhaddith of Yemen' just as they had over-extolled their other muqallads al-Albani (the muhadith of Syria) then the muhadith of our time and finally the renewer of the fifteenth century. Bin Baz and Ibn Uthaymeen (The two Imams, the Faqih of our time.")

He openly asked for the green dome of Medina to be demolished and for the grave of Rasulullah to be brought out of its mosque. He has attacked Abu Hanifa and his followers and reffered to them as being wine-bibbers approved by Abu Jahl and Communists. He founded a Jihadi group aimed at targeting the graves of the saint in Yemen. His aim was to blow them up.

Towards the end of his career he took to publicly threatening Bin Baz, Al-Albani, Abdul Rahman Abdul Khaliq and Ibn Uthaymeen with Hellfire:

From an interview with the Yemen Times:

Interviewer: Is your movement a radical movement related to Islamic Jihad movement?

Al Wadii: We are common in our goals with some movements as the ones you mentioned, as we all intend to serve Allah and spread Islam on the globe.

Interviewer: Reports say that you train your followers for military combat and sometimes send them to Chechnya, Afghanistan and Kashmir for Jihad. How true is this?

Al Wadi: I understood they were cleaning or playing with the gun... and a bullet came out of the gun towards his chest leading to his

death... Guns, as I said, are prohibited for the use of unqualified students.

Unable to have himself treated in Yemen for a liver disease, al-Wadii was taken to Saudi Arabia for care and, in his Saudi hospital deathbed, recanted the edict of an apostasy he had pronounced against the Saudi government. Among his succesors are Muhammad and Ahmad al-Wasabi and the foul mouthed Yahya al-Hajuri

20) Zahir Ihsan Ilahi

He is an arrogant Salafi who was killed in an air-strike. He was refuted by the Ulama from Deoband (Pakistan).

21 And 22) Muhammad Jamal Zeeno and Salih Al-Fawdhan

An O level equivalency holder who taught elementary school in Syria and evolved into a collector of tidbits from here and there out of which he devised books he attributed to himself. He is responsible for works published by Darussalam. He has written many literatures which are arrogant and ignorant in trying to persuade someone into accepting his opinion. Zeeno attacked Dr Muhammad Ali Al-Sabuni and his tafsir with a tract replete and with risible mistakes which he co-authored with a government cleric by the name of Shaykh Salih Al—Fawdhan, the proud author of Saudi religious-curriculum books in which he advocates the legalisation of slavery.

They both show signs of anthropomorphism and corporalism as they attack the scholars who firmed a stance against it. They both accuse Imam al-Sawi of shirk for saying in his tafsir that the prophet ‘became the wellspring of mercies and the wellspring of bestowals’ As Dr al-Sabuni said in his rebuttal, “His claim that this is exaggeration and shirk is a strange, laughable claim! For the matter of shirk is a very grave matter, and to impute it to one of the expert Ulama among the Quranic commentators, such as Imam al-Sawi in his marginalia on the Jalalayn, calls for doubting the orthodoxy of all of the Ulama of Tafsir and Hadith in the Community of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) – the inheritos of the Prophets.”

They both deny the existence of metaphors within the Quraan on the pretense that “the words of Allah in the Quraan must be

understood literally!" This is one of the strangest pre-requisite of tafsir (exegesis) to know the language of the Arabs, in which metaphor holds such a pre-eminent place that it could be said to form most of its beauty. Hence the emphasis of the people of Tafsir on knowledge of rhetoric and style, metaphors and figures of speech which abound in the Quran are an integral part og its stunning inimitability. Everyone including Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim (the only two scholars from the past that Salafis will refer to) don't deny the use of metaphors in the Quran.

Salih Al-Fawzan and Muhammad Jamil Zeeno want us to believe metaphors don't exist in the Quran. So for figurative verses; what meaning will we give them?

For instance: "They are rainment (libasun) for you and you are rainment for them". Quran (2:187)

They want us to believe this verse to mean "women are shirts and trousers for men and men are shirts and trousers for them"!

It is fair to say that the reason for this obscurantism is banal ignorance and unintelligence. As well as this, if we were to talk all verses literally then we would end up attributing to Allah the qualities of mockery (istinzha), deception (khida) and scheming (makr) and others of their outlandish claims that fly in the face of scholarship – la hawla wala quwata ila billah.

In spite of their huge errors, they still object to al-Sabuni's calling the prophet Sayyid al-Kainat (the master of all creatures) as an outlandish exaggeration and they claim that he is only the master of the human beings. However, the prophet (PBUH) himself said, "wa ana akramu al awwalina wal akhirina ala rabbi wala fakhr – (I am the most honourable of the first and the last before my lord, and this is not to boast!" as narrated in al-Tirmidhi and al-Darimi. Furthermore, it is the agreement of the Muslim ummah that the seal of prophets was not sent to humans only - the Quran names him the mercy to the worlds – and whosoever he was sent besides human beings, he is surely superior to them also! This is a typical objection of the Salafis in Islam that no one preceded before them apart from the Muatazila (deviated sect).

Al-Habib Alawi ibn Ahmad ibn al Hasan challenged them in his book Misbah al-Anam to find the following figures of speech in Surah al Adiyat (100). This challenge still stands:

- Legal literalism
- Lexical literalism
- Customary literalism
- Figure of speech and synecdoche
- Hypallage and conceit, or figure of thought
- Literalistic metaphor
- Metaphor showing conformity of tenor and vehicle
- Metaphor showing disparity of tenor and vehicle
- Generalised metaphor
- Particularised metaphor
- Concretive metaphor
- Continuous metaphor
- Absolute metaphor
- Simple metaphor
- Applied metaphor
- The point where the ‘simple’ and the ‘applied’ metaphors meet.
- The point where metonymy takes place.
- Allusive metonymy
- Alternate and chiasmic simile
- Single and two tiered simile
- Generalised and detailed similie
- Brachylogy
- Circumlocution and periphrasis
- Equivoque
- Literal predicate
- Figurative predicate/ aphoristic figure of speech

- Syllepsis or zeugmatic construction instead of expressed repetition.
- The point where the personal pronoun of prestige is used.
- The point of sudden transition
- The point of connection and disconnection [between a final consonant and the initial consonant of the following word].
- Completely related subordination and completely unrelated subordination
- Coordination and apposition
- Proportion between sentences and its types
- Aspects of the perfection of beauty and eloquence in that proportion
- Precautionary overstatement and constrastive emphasis.

Let’s see if any Salafi on the face of this earth can complete this challenge. Scholars that follow a madhab have completed this task now it’s your turn.

Salafis have not only caused a problem within Islam but for Islam as well. Shaykh Fawdhan offered a verdict ruling all liberal muslims as disbelievers. The western media quickly spread this news to promote Islamophobia and create a negative image of Islam.

May Allah save us from this fitna. Ameen

Ibn Taymiyyah and the Deviated Salafi Beliefs

Salafis base their beliefs on Ibn Baaz, Uthaymeen and Albani. Apart from this, the only esteemed scholars of the past that they refer to regarding matters of fiqh and Aqeedah are Ibn Taymmiyah and Ibnul Qayyim (student of Ibn Taymiyyah). They disregard his influential beliefs such as Tassawuf (Purification) and his views regarding following a madhab (taqleed) and focus on his controversial beliefs such as Tajseem (anthropomorphism) and view such as divorce (three talaq issue) and many other erred beliefs which will be thoroughly discussed throughout this chapter.

Ahmad Ibn Abdul Haleem ibn Abduallah ibn Abi al-Qasim Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi Al-Din Abu al-Abbas ibn Shihab al-Din ibn Majd al-Din al-Harrani al-Dimashqi al-Hanbali (661-728) was one of the most influential scholars of the Hanbali school of thought, praised by Al-Dhahabi as “greater than his life can be illustrated by the like of myself” and by the hadith master Salahuddin al-Alai as “Our Shaykh, Master, and Imam between us and Allah, the master of verification, the wayfarer of the best path, the owner of the multifarious merits and overpowering proofs which all hosts agree are impossible to enumerate, the Shaykh, the Imam and faithful servant of his Lord, the doctor in the religion, the Ocean, the light-giving Pole of spirituality, the leader of the Imams, the blessing of the community, the sign-post of the people of knowledge, the inheritor of prophets, the last of those capable of independent legal reasoning, the most unique of the scholars of the religion, Shaykh al-Islam.....” Later, both al-Dhahabi and al-Alai changed their minds and the latter went on to list the matters in which Ibn Taymiyyah went astray.

Al-Alai’s summary of Ibn Taymmiyah’s deviation

Ibn Tulun said: “The hadith master Salah al Din Al-Ala’i said: ‘the list of the matters in which Ibn Taymiyyah contravened the people of knowledge in the foundations and branches. Among them are the matters in which he violated consenus, and among those in which he contravened the correct position within the Hanbali school of thought.”

He goes on to explain the controversial topics thoroughly.

- “He says that divorce does not take place after three talaqs but all one has to do is pay or perform an expiation for perjury (kaffarat yamin). – Not one of the jurists of the Muslims before him ever said that such an expiation was valid. He gave this fatwa for a long time. The matter grew such that huge masses of the uneducated public fell into imitating him and general disaster ensued. He also said that the divorce of a woman in menses does not take effect; nor does it not take effect in the non-menstrual cycle either, if the husband has intercourse with his wife; the triple divorce amount to one, although he has reported to the consenus of the Ummah to the contrary in the matter, and said that whoever violates it commits apostasy; then he violated it and cause many people to fall into the same violation.”
- “He also said that if one deliberately misses a prayer, it is not lawful to make it up.”
- “That women in menses may circumambulate around the House without owing any expiation and that it is permissible for her.”
- “That taxes are licit to take by those who allocate them; that taxes taken from merchants fulfil their Zakat obligation even if not levied under the name, nor in the form of zakah.”
- “That liquids do not become impure if a mouse or the like dies in them.”
- “That the person in the state of major ritual impurity (junub) can pray his supererogatory night prayers with dry ablution (tayammum) and that he does not wait until he washes with water in order to pray if the time of fajr has entered, even if he is at home...” - Shaykh Al-alai goes on to say that he saw one of his imitators doing this so he forbade him to do it.
- “He was once asked about the sale of femsle slaves who gave birth to their master’s child or children and he said it is correct and gave fatwa to that effect.”
- “Among the doctrinal positions which no one held but he, is that of good and bad (al-husn wal qubh) [for Allah], which is the belief of the Mutazila. He adopted their position, defended it, wrote in support of it, and represented it as the Religion of Allah. Among his doctrinal positions is the claim that created matters subsist in Allah- greatly exalted is he above what he claimed! – and that he

is made of parts and needs a hand, an eye, a foot and the like in a way in whole needs the part; the Quraan is created in his essence; that the world is ‘generically pre-existent’ (qadimun bil naw) and that it was always with Allah without beginning, created but everlasting, thus representing Allah as forced and not freely choosing to act – exalted is he, how patient and gentle He is!

- He also believed in the corporeality, direction and displacement of Allah. Who is exalted beyond such things. He wrote in one of his books that Allah is the same size as the throne, neither large nor smaller, exalted is Allah beyond that! He authored a book stating that the knowledge of Allah does not apply to infinites such as the bliss of the people of Paradise and that it does not encompass infinites. This is the issue over which foot of the Imam slipped (al-Burhan by Ibn al-Juwayni).
- “Among his lone doctrinal positions is the claim that the prophets are not immune to sin.”
- “That our prophet has no special status before Allah, and that he cannot be used as an intermediary except if someone is mistakenly doing so. He authored many pages on this. He also said that the under-taking of travel to the prophet in order to visit someone is a sin and that it is unlawful to shorten the prayers during such travel. He insisted on this a great deal. None of the Muslims ever said this before him.”
- “He also said that the punishment of the people of the fire will come to an end and not last eternally.
- Among his lone positions also is that the actual words of the Torah and the Gospel were not substituted but remain in the same form in which they have been revealed, and that distortion only took place in regards of their translation. He authored many books on this.

Shaykh al-Islam Taqi al-Subki said: “He memorised a lot and did not discipline himself with a Shaykh.” He goes on to say in his book (al-Itibar) that you should not take knowledge from someone who takes his knowledge from books.

Ibn Taymiyyah's views and manners created intense controversy both during his lifetime and after his death. There were many divided opinions regarding his rulings. Ibn Rajab relates that Imad al-Din al-Wasiti admired Ibn Taymiyyah to the point that he swore to his greatness and studied under him although older than him, yet "he and a group of his close companions at the time condemned what they heard him say against some of the major great Imams or against the ascetics and so on and so forth."

Al-Sakhawi in al-Ilan wal-Tawbikh (p.61) noted: "Certain people gave rise to disavowal and a general reluctance to make use of their knowledge despite their stature in knowledge, pious scrupulousness and ascetism. The reason for this was because of the looseness of their tongues and their tactlessness in blunt speech and excessive criticism, such as Ibn Hazm and Ibn Taymiyyah who were subsequently tried and harmed."

An illustration of Ibn Taymiyyah's ambivalent status is the fact that, although the Shafi Hadith master al-Mizzi did not call anyone Shaykh al Islam in his time besides Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Abi Umar Al-Hanbali and Imam Taqi al-Din Al-Subki, the Hanafi scholar ala al din Al-Bukhari issued a fatwa that if anyone called Ibn Taymiyyah "Shaykh-ul-Islam" they would commit disbelief and authored a book against him.

Ibn Nasir al-Din al-Dimashqi countered this fatwa. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (best commentator of Saheeh al-Bukhari) wrote: "Nevertheless, he was a human being who sometimes erred and sometimes he was right. Whatever he was right in – and this is the greater part – is available for benefit erred in, he should not be imitated in it; rather, he is excused."
Shaykh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghudda in his book includes Ibn Taymiyyah amongst scholars who never married and names him "Shaykh al-Islam and the standard bearer of all standard-bearers."

In Bayan Zaghl ul-ilm Al Dhahabi writes: "If you were to excel in the principles (al-Usool) and their affiliates – logics, ethics,

philosophy, the sayings of the ancients and conundrums – all the while protecting yourself with the Book and Sunna as well as the doctrines of Salaf, then joined between reason and transmission, still, I do not think you would reach the level of Ibn Taymiyyah. No, by Allah! You would not come near it. Yet, I saw what happened to him – how much opposition he faced, desertion, rightful and wrongful declarations of heresy, apostasy and mendacity! Before he embarked on Islamic doctrine he was shining with light and enlightening others, bearing the marks of the Salaf on his face. Then he became lightless, dark and somber to countless droves of the people, a wicked Anti-christ and disbeliever according to his enemies, while great numbers of the wise and the elite according to his enemies, while great numbers of the wise and the elite considered him an eminent, brilliant and scholarly innovator while the commonality of his uneducated friends, one and all, deemed him the standard bearer of Islam, the defender of the Religion and the reviver of the Sunnah."

Al Dhahabi in the Ibar, after praising his teacher, states: "He also had some strange opinions on account of which he was attacked."
Muhammad Ibn Abdul Hadi in al-uqud al duriyya makes a similarly meandrous admission that his teacher committed innovation: "He gave vent to certain expressions which early and late Scholars never dared use while he boldly indulged them."
Ibn Daqiq al Id – the renewer of the seventh century – said, upon meeting with Ibn Taymiyyah: "I saw a man with all the science [laid upon] before his eyes, talking what he wished and leaving what he wished." Asked why he did not debate him. Ibn Daqiq al-Id answered: "Because he loves to speak and I love silence."

Imam Salah al-Din al-Safadi said: "The Shaykh, Imam and erudite scholar Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah – Allah have mercy on him! – was immensely learned but he had a defective intelligence that embroiled him in perils and made him fall into hardships."

Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali – "Large groups of the Imams of Ahl al Hadith and their hadith masters and jurists loved the Shaykh and

venerated him but they disliked that he was involved with the theologians and philosophers, for uninvolvement was the way of the early imams of Ahl-al-Hadith such as Imam Shafi, Imam Ahmad and the like. Similarly, many of the Ulama among the jurists, the hadith scholars and the righteous hated this idiosyncratic promotion of certain aberrant matters on which the Salaf have condemned together with those who promoted them, to the point that one of his judges among out companions forbade him to give fatwa in some of those instances."
In Ibn Rajab's book refuting those who don't follow a madhab he castigates anyone that claims Ijtihad outside the Four Sunni Schools, Ibn Rajab unmistakenly points out the finger of Ibn Taymiyyah when he writes: "Do not pass judgement on all Divisions of the believers as if you were given knowledge they were not or reached a state that they did not."

The Fatwa Hamawiyya attributing Direction to Allah

His first clash with the scholars occurred in 698 in Damascus when he was barred from teaching after he issues his Fatwa Hamawiyya in which he unambiguously attributes literal upward direction to Allah. He was refuted by many scholars such as Imam Jahbal al Kilab (d.773). He wrote: "How can you say that Allah is literally (haqiqatan) in the heaven, and literally say above the heaven, and literally on the throne and literally in the throne??""

Imam Kawthari penned another refutation, Khururat al Qawli bil Jiha in which he repots al Bayadi's explanation of Imam Abu Hanifa's statement: "Whoever says 'I do not know whether my Lord is in the heaven or on the earth' is a disbeliever and similarly whoever says ' He is on the throne and I don't know whether the throne is in the heaven or on earth' is a disbeliever.

This is because he implies that the Creator has a direction and a boundary, and anything that possesses direction and boundary is necessarily created. So this statement explicitly attributes imperfection to Allah. The believer in Divine corporeality and direction is someone who denies the existence of anything other than the objects that can be

pointed to with the senses. They deny the essence of the deity who is transcendent beyond that. This makes them positively guilty of disbelief.

His several imprisonments

Ibn Taymiyyah then returned to his activities until he was summoned by the authorities again in 705 to answer for his “Aqida Wasatiyya” (A piece of writing which is hugely accepted by the Salafis.) He spent the following few years in and out of jail in Cairo and Damascus or defending himself from various ‘abhorrent charges’ according to Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani. Because he officially repented, his life was spared, although at one point it was proclaimed in Damascus that “Whoever follows the beliefs of Ibn Taymiyyah, his life and property are licit for seizure.”

These events instigated great dissension among the scholars in the Damascus and Cairo as detailed by the Shafii Imam Taqi al-din al-Hisni.

Ibn Taymiyyah at various times declared himself a follower of the Shafii Madhab – as did many Hanbalis in Damascus – and an Ashari. Ibn Hajar wrote in al-Durar al-Kamina:

An investigation [of his views] was conducted by several scholars and a written statement was drawn up in which he said “I am an Ashari”. We find in his handwriting, verbatism: “I believe that the Quran is a meaning which exist in the Divine essence and that it is an attribute from the pre eternal attributes of His essence, and that it is uncreated, and that it does not consist in the letter nor the voice, and that His saying: [the merciful established himself over the throne] (20:5) is not meant literally and I don’t know of what consists its meaning but only Allah knows it, and one speaks of His ‘establishment’. It was written by Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah.” They witnessed that he had repented of his own free will from everything that contravened the above. This took place on the 25th of Rabiul Awwal 707 and it was witnessed by a huge array of scholars and others.”

Najm al din Sulayman (657-716) – whom Al-Dhahabi admired – said:

“Ibn Taymiyyah could bring up in one hour from the Book, the Sunnah, the Arabic language, and philosophical speculation, material which no one could bring up even in many sessions, as if these sciences were before his very eyes and he was picking and choosing from them at will.

A time came when his companions took to over praising him and this drove him to be satisfied with himself until he became conceited before his fellow human beings. He became convinced that he was a scholar capable of independent reasoning (mujtahid). Henceforth he began to answer each and every scholar great and small, past and present, until he went all the way to Hadhrat Umar and faulted him in some matter. This reached the ears of Shaykh Ibrahim al-Raqi who reprimanded him. Ibn Taymiyyah went to see him, apologised, and asked forgiveness. He also spoke against Hadhrat Ali and said: “He made mistakes in seventeen different matters.”

Because of his fanatic opinions, he attacked the Asharis until he started to insult Imam Ghazali, at which point some people opposed him and almost killed him. [...] They asserted that he had blurted out certain words concerning doctrine which came out of his mouth in the course of his sermons and legal pronouncements. They mentioned that he had cited the Hadith of the descent of Allah (to the nearest heaven), then climbed down two steps from the pulpit and said: “Just like the descent of mine.” And so was branded as an anthropomorphist. They also cited his cited his censure of whoever uses the Prophet as an intermediary or seeks help from him (istagatha).

People were divided into parties because of him. Some considered him an anthropomorphist because of what he had mentioned in Aqida al Hamawiyya (followed by salafis) and other books of his, to the effect that the Hand, Foot, Shin, and Face are literal attributes of Allah and that He is established upon the throne with his essence. Some people considered him a heretic due to him saying that you can’t ask the prophet for help and the fact that this amounted to diminishing and undermining the greatness of the prophet. Others considered him a hypocrite because of what he said about Hadhrat Ali. Namely, that he had been forsaken everywhere he went, had repeatedly tried to acquire the caliphate and never attained it, fought out of lust for power rather than the religion, and said that “he loved leadership while Uthman loved money”. He fully aware of what he said, while Ali had declared Islam as a boy, and a boy’s Islam is not considered sound upon his mere word. In sum, he said ugly things such as these, and it was said against him that

he was s hypocrite, in view of the Prophet's saying (to Ali): "Only a hypocrite has hatred for you."

Al-Bukhari narrated that the prophet came in and saw Ali and Fatima sleeping, whereupon he said: "Are you not praying?" Ali said: Our souls are in the Hand of Allah...." The prophet walked away, slapping his thigh and saying [Man disputes much] (18:54). Ibn Taymiyya commented in his Fatwa (15:229): "This is blameworthy disputation [...] and is one of the kinds of arguments used by the Qadariyya sect." Such an explanation has no precedent.

Ibn Taymiyyah also acknowledged the reality of the God-given, extraordinary spiritual unveilings (kashf) that takes place at the hands of the Awliyah by saying – "It is established that the awliya possess spiritual communications and unveilings" In our times, most of his purported followers and imitators as well as modernists reject this miraculous activity even though Ibn Taymiyyah affirmed it.

Ibn Taymiyyah was an advocate for Tasawuff (purification). This is something which Salafis don't believe in and consider it to be an innovation. He has a chain from Shaykh Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani so therefore he is part of the Qadariyya Sufi Order.

i. Abdul Qadir Al Jilani

ii. Abu Umar ibn Qudama and
Muwaffaq al-Din ibn Quadama

iii. Ibn Abi Umar ibn Qudama
iv. Ibn Taymiyyah
v. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya
vi. Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali

Ibn Taymiyyah states: "I wore the blessed Sufi cloak of Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani, there being only two Shaykhs between me and him."

He has also written a hundred page partial commentary aiming to show that orthodox tasawuff is in consonance with Quran and Hadith and the consensus of the community.
Insofar as the goal of tasawuff is the purification of the heart by the progress through states and stations.

Ibn Taymiyyah imitated Imam al-Ghazali's fatwa in al-Munqidh min al-Dalal in considering tasawuff obligatory upon every muslim.

His student (Ibnul Qayyim Al-Jawzi) wrote much on the subject of tasawwuf, with which he evidently felts strong affinities. In Miftah Dar al-Sadaa he states:
"Ilm al Yaqin is the first level of the levels of certitude and consists in its knowledge and full awareness. It is an unveiling of the object of knowledge to the heart, by which the latter beholds it without the least doubt, just like the unveiling of the visible to the eye. Ayn al Yaqin is the second level, but related to the eye, just as the first level is related to the heart. Haqq al-yaqin is the third level consisting in the direct apprehension of the object of knowledge and its full, complete experience." As well as this Ibnul Qayyim wrote an extensive commentary on Al-Harawi al-Ansari's tasawuff manual entitled 'Madarij al-Salikin and in which he said:
"Religion is all moral character (khuluq) and whoever bests you in moral character, bests you in religion. It is the same with tasawuff. Al-Kattani said: Tasawuff is moral character, and whoever bests you in moral character, bests you in Religion. Truly the hardest thing for human nature is the modification of the moral qualities and traits with which the selves have been stamped. Those who earnestly engaged in harsh discipline and arduous strivings worked on nothing else. Most of them did not succeed in changing the self, but the latter became fully employed in those exercises and thus unable to wield its influences. One day I asked Shaykh al Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him!) about this matter and how to eliminate defects and occupy oneself with the cleansing of

> one's path. The gist of his reply was that the self is like a garbage pile; the more you dig it, the more of it comes out to the surface, if you can pave a pathway over it and go past it, do so, and do not preoccupy yourself with digging into it for you shall never reach its bottom. Tasawuff is one of the cornerstones (zawaya) of true wayfaring and the purification and disciplining of the self so that it may prepare itself for its journey to the company of the Highest Assembly and for being together with its beloved. For 'one is with the one he loves' as Sumnun stated: "The lovers of Allah have gained the honour of both the world and the hereafter, for 'one is with the one he loves'. And Allah knows best."

Further charges of heresy were brought against Ibn Taymiyya for his assertions on divorce pronounced in innovative fashion in violation of the consenus. He held that:

1) A threefold formulation of divorce in a single sitting counted as one.
2) Divorce pronounced at the time of menses did not take effect.
3) Swearing a vow to divorce could be taken back through expiation (kaffarah), in violation of the Consensus of the Salaf and the four imams.
4) His student Ibnul Qayyim (in Ilam al Muwaqqi) blatantly contradicts himself by violently rejecting khul' as a legal loophole in order to avoid the finality of a triple divorce – yet, a few pages later, he recommends the very same loophole.

 Salafis follow his ruling in this regard. Apart from them, the only other people that do this are SHIAS.

Following this, Ala al-Din Al-Bukhari issued his infamous fatwa. Shaykh Taqi Al-Din Al Subki said: "Ibn Taymiyyah has spread deceit in affirming the existence of difference of opinion in the matter of divorce, which is a lie, a fabrication, and impudence on his part against Islam. It has been affirmed by many of the scholars that he who opposes the consensus of the community is a kaafir."

Ibn Rajab supported Ibn Taymiyyah regarding this view in Al-Ahadith wal athar..... However, after analysing the hadiths relevant to the topic – he revised his position and issued his Mushkil al-Ahadith in which he refuted Ibn Taymiyyah's position with the words:

"Know that nothing explicit whatsoever is established as authentic from any of the Companions, nor any of this Successors, nor any of the Imams of the Salaf, whose word is relied upon halal and haram fatwas, that a triple divorce after consummation counts as one when pronounced in a single formula."

Ibn Hajar relates, "Ibn Rajab was criticised for giving fatwa according to the positions of Ibn Taymiyyah but when he dissociated himself from from them the Taymiyyans ostracised him."

Yusuf Ibn Abdul Hadi, in defence of Ibn Taymiyyah, admitted that the consensus and the position of the Ummah is that the triple divorce counts as three divorces and the statement is sound and it is the true position of the Hanbali School, Imam Shafi, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifa, Sufyan Thawri, Ibn Abi Layla and Imam Awzaii.

The consensus of the ummah is three divorces equals three and the marriage is null and void despite any conditions.

1) Ibn Hajar – fathal bari
2) Ibn Abdul Bar in al-Istidhkar
3) Ibn Hubayra in al-Ijma

His prohibiton of travel to visit the prophet (pbuh)

After spending the years 719-721 in jail, Ibn Taymiyyah was jailed again in 726 until his death two years later amid charges of kufr for declaring – without precedent in Islam – that one who travels to visit the Holy prophet commits a prohibition (haram), a sin (masiya) and an innovation (bidah).

His opinion regarding the Madhahib

Ibn Taymiyyah confined himself to the principles of the Hanbali school of thought. In his book (Majmooatul Fatawa Volume 14 Page 263)

mentions that ‘it is known that the followers of the madhahib (like hanbali,shafi,maliki and Hanafi) – their deen is one [and is the deen of Islam] and whomsoever amongst them obeys Allah and his Rasool according to his ability then he is a successful believer with the agreement and the consensus of the believer.’ He mentions the four schools of thought and not the Salafis. This goes to show that the group of pseudo-salafis and ahle-hadith did not exist at that time; yet the madhabs did and they were praised by him.

The Hanbali rejection of this fatwa

Al Mardawi, Ibn Hubayra and others stand that the entirety of the early and late authorities in the Hanbali Madhab stipulate the desirability (istihbab) of visiting the grave of the prophet (PBUH). In Madina, most especially after Hajj/ and or travelling to do so. Ibn Muflih, al-Mardawi and Mari ibn Yusuf stated the Sunnah character of visiting the graves of the Muslims and the permissibility of travelling to do so.

Shaykh Taqi al-Din Al-Subki also refuted him by stating the Hadith – “Whoever visits my grave, my intercession will be guaranteed for him.” As proof against Ibn Taymiyyah’s claim that “all the hadiths that concern the merit of visitation are weak or rather forged.” And denounced Ibn Taymiyyahs’s unprecedented fatwa as a flagrant innovation.

Shaykh al-Islam al Iraqi [725-806) (teacher of Ibn Hajar) said “There is no prohibiton on the act of travelling to the prophet’s grave.” He said this in refutation of Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers. When it says “Mounts are not to be saddled except to travel to three mosques” does not prohibit travelling elsewhere. Rather it shows the importance of the three mosques.

Al-Iraqi further reacted reacted to Ibn Taymiyyah’s claim that it was an innovation in the Religion to show generosity to relatives on the day of Ashura with the word: “I find it strange that such words should come from this Imam, whose followers say that he encompassed Quran and Sunnah in knowledge and practise.” One who has not heard of something should not deny that it exists!” Al Iraqi then proceeded to show that, on the contrary, it was a sunna based on sound narrations of the prophet (PBUH) as well as the companions and the Imams of the successors and the succeeding generations.”

Shaykh al Islam Ibn Hajar in Fath al Bari said of Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwa prohibiting travel in order to visit the Prophet (PBUH) – "this is one of the ugliest matters ever reported on him."

Al Sadafi said:

Ibn Taymiyyah glided his statement. Concerning the visit to the Best of Creation, Whereupon souls came in droves to complain. To the best scholars and purest of Imams. Who compiled this book, providing them with a cure. And so it was indeed the Healing of Sickness.

Al-Qari said in his commentary on Iyad al-Shifa

Ibn Taymiyyah – one of the Hanbalis – committed excess when he declared it prohibited to travel to visit the Prophet (PBUH)'s grave just as the others also committed excess in saying that it is obligatory in Religion to know that visitation is an act by which one draws near to Allah and whoever denies it is judged to be a kaafir. Yet, the latter view is probably closer to being correct than the first, because to declare prohibited something the Ulema by the consensus declared mustahab (desirable) is disbelief. For that is greater than declare prohibited something agreed upon as merely mubaah (permissible).

Imam al Khafaji said in regards to this: "He imagined that he was defending monotheism with all kinds of nonsense which do not deserve mention for they do not originate from the mind of a rational person, let alone an eminent one – Allah forgive him!"

Also rejecting the fatwa as invalid are Shaykh Izz-al-dinn ibn Jamma, Shaykh Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, Shaykh Abu Abdullah al-Maghribi

Muhammad Ibn Abd al Hadi (fanatic defence of his teacher)

An anti-ashari student of Ibn Taymiyya and al-Dhahabi, he violently attacked Shaykh al-Islam as-Subki in a refutation called "the hurtful blade in the throat of Subki" in which he 'adopted the manner of fanatics and departed from founded accusations' in order to defend the innovations of his teacher. He falsely accuses Subki of encouraging pilgrimage to the prophet's (PBUH) grave, prostrating to it, circumbulating around it and the belief that the Prophet (PBUH) removes

difficulty, grants ease and causes whoever he wishes to enter into paradise, all independently of Allah.

Numan Al-Alusi also wrote a refutation on Al-Haytami and As-Subki. In order to persuade a person to accept the infallibility of Ibn Taymmiyah within the book, he states: Shaykh Abdul Fatah Abu Ghuddah said, “My teacher Shaykh Muhammad Raghib al-Tabbakh treated Ibn Taymiyyah as if he were a prophet!” In addition, he adds a quote from a jurist by the name of Abu Hafs al-Bazzar (688-749) who went so far as to claim that it is impossible for anyone but an “ostentatious world-crazed liar” to find fault with Ibn Taymiyyah.”

The hadith – “Whoever visits my grave, my intercession is guaranteed for him.” – has a hasan (fair) chain as concluded by Mamdud Mamduh, Imam Abul Hayy and others. As well as this, other scholars have declared it authentic (saheeh) such as Ibn al Sakan and Abdul Haq al-Ishbilli and other. Hadith masters such as Ibn Hajar and his student Al-Sakhawi have also classed it authentic

Bin Baaz and Albani both believe it to be forged to the contrary of the great scholars above. They probably did this so that it will help them support their imprudent verdict.

Imam al-Sakhawi said: “The emphasis and encouragement on visiting his noble grave is mentioned in numerous hadiths, and it would suffice to show this if there was only the hadith whereby the truthful and the god-confirmed prophet (PBUH) promises that his intercession, among other things, becomes guaranteed for whoever visits him, and the Imams are in complete agreement from the time directly after his passing until our own time that this [visiting him] is among the best acts of drawing near to Allah. There is no contest among the jurists of the four schools as to the probative force of the narration of Ibn Umar, as they adduce it time and again to illustrate the strong desirability of visiting the prophet in Madinah. See, for example, among Hanbali sources alone, the textbooks already cited. See also the additional sound texts illustrating visits to the Prophet among them that of the companion Bilal Al-Habashi all the way from Damascus with the expressed intention of visiting the prophet (PBUH) to greet him, and upon arrival, his rubbing his face against the Prophetic grave in tears efore proceeding to raise the adhan

upon the request of the two grandsons of the prophet (PBUH) , as well as the companion's practice of seeking the prophet as an intermediary for their needs by visiting his grave, such as Bilal ibn al-Harith al-Muzani, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Aisha and Fatima."

His last days and repentance from his activities

In the final five months of his last two year period in Jail , Ibn Taymiyyah was prevented from writing, at which time he returned to prayer and the intensive recitation of the Holy Quraan and he repented from having spent time writing doctrinal refutations instead of focusing on the commentary of the Quraan and the like. He confided to his faithful student Ibnul Qayyim; "My paradise and my Garden are in my breast (meaning his faith and knowledge are in his heart) – and wherever I go they never depart from me. My prison is my seclusion, my execution is martyrdom and my exile is an excursion."

Al-Sadafi wrote: "He wasted his time refuting the Christians and the Rafida, or whoever objected to the religion or contradicted it, but if he had devoted himself to explaining al-Bukhari or the noble Quraan, he would have placed the garland of his well-ordered speech on the necks of the people of knowledge."

Al-Nabhani said: "He refuted the Christians, the Shias, the logicians and then the Asharis and Ahlus Sunnah, in short, sparing no one whether Muslim or non Muslim, sunni or otherwise."

Al-Dhahabi said: "Our Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, in his last days, used to say: 'I do not declare anyone of the ummah a disbeliever, and he said, 'The Prophet (PBUH) said, "No one always keeps his ablution except a believer." Therefore, whoever regularly performs the prayers with ablution, he is a Muslim.

His student Al-Dhahabi praised him lavishly as "the brilliant Shaykh, Imam, erudite scholar, censor, jurist, mujtahid, and commentator of the Quraan." but acknowledged that Ibn Taymiyya's disparaging manners alienated even his admirers. For example, the grammarian Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi – whom Al-Dhahabi considered the most knowledgeable Master of his time in the Arabic language – praised Ibn Taymiyyah until he found out that the latter believed himself a greater expert in the

Arabic language then Sibawayh, whereupon he retracted his previous praise and dissociated himself from him. In his tafseer, he mentioned the anthropomorphist beliefs of Ibn Taymiyyah. Hajji Khalifa said: “Ibn Taymiyyah authored a book entitled ‘al-Arsh’ in which he stated that Allah sits on the throne and leaves some space vacant for the Prophet (PBUH) to sit next to him. Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi mentioned it in his Quranic commentary and said he read it in Ibn Taymiyyah’s handwriting,

He had many admirers but they all turned into critics. For example: Qadi al zamalkani, Jalal al Qazwini, al-Qunawi, al-Jariri and al-Dhahabi himself. The latter in his naseehah, addresses Ibn Taymiyyah with the words: “When will you stop criticising the scholars and finding fault with people?” Al-Zamalkani moved from praising Ibn Taymiyyah as ‘the greatest memoriser of the last five hundred years’ to becoming his chief prosecutor in Damascus and authoring two refutation against him: one on divorce and another one on the visitation of the Prophet (PBUH).

His revival of Ibn Hazm’s Vicious Style

The Ulama saw the influence of Ibn Hazm in Ibn Taymiyyah. Al Safadi said: “He adorned himself with [Ibn Hazm’s] Muhalla, imitating whatever he wished from it – if he wished; he would cite it from memory – and adducing from it a number of attacks and disparagements.”

Al-Dhahabi said: “I do not consider him sinless, and I even disagree with him on a number of questions in both the foundations and the branches, for, despite his vast knowledge, great courage, abundant wit, and staunch defence of what Allah had prohibited, he was nevertheless a human being among other human beings, hot tempered in his manner of debate, given to anger and outburst against his opponents. This would sow enmity toward him in people’s hearts. If he has shown kindness towards his opponents he would have been the pivot of consensus,”

When Imam al-Dhahabi was around fifty years old, he wrote a piece of advice to Ibn Taymiyyah (who was in prison – reaching the end of his life) called al-nasiha aldhahabiyya lil-ibni Taymiyyah . In this brief but scathing epistle, the author distances himself from his contemporary and admonishes him without naming him, calling him “an eloquent polemicist who neither rests nor sleeps.” The Nasiha contains the following prediction of Taymiyya followers of our times:

“Oh! The disappointment of him who follows you! For he is exposed to corruption in basic beliefs and to dissolution, particularly if he is short of learning and religion, a self indulgent idler who does well for you by fighting on your behalf with his hand and tongue, while he is actually your enemy in his being and heart. What are your followers but dogmatic do-nothings of little intelligence, common liars with dull minds, silent outlanders strong in guile, or dryly righteous without understanding? If you do not believe it, just look at them and honestly assess them!”

A “Salafi” apologist recently cast doubt on the authenticity of al-Dhahabi’s authorship of this epistle, also claiming that, even if al-Dhahabi wrote it, then it is directed to someone other than Ibn Taymiyyah!

However, Al Sakhawi does not doubt the authenticity of its attribution to al-Dhahabi and calls it “a glorious statement of doctrine.” And the two major experts on al-Dhahabi’s works. Salahudeen Al-Munajjid and Bashshar Awwad Maruf declared that there was no doubt that Al-Dhahabi wrote it in his mature years and addressed it to Ibn Taymiyyah. Among the proofs of its authenticity is that the hadith Master Abu Sa’id Al-Ala’i said he copied it himself from al-Dhahabi’s autograph manuscript. The mufaasir Qadir Burhan Ad-Din (725-790) then copied it himself from al-Ala’i’s autograph manuscript, then Taqi ad Deen Abu Bakr Ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad (d.779) copied it himself from the autograph manuscript of Ibn Jamma. Al-Kawthari published its facsimile edition as written by Ibn Qadi Shuhba.

Al-Subki’s Summary of Ibn Taymiyyah’s Deviations in Doctrine

Shaykh Al-Islam Taqi Al-Din As-Subki refuted him in the Durra and the first epistle of Rasail he wrote:

“When Ibn Taymiyyah innovated whatever he innovated in the principles of doctrines and destroyed the pillars and seams of the foundations of Islam after camouflaging himself with the pretense of following the Book and the Sunnah, pretending to summon people ot the truth and guide him to Paradise, he left conformity and entered novelty, strayed from the congregation of the Muslims by violating the consensus and attributed to the transcendent essence what presupposes corporeality and compound nature. He claimed that dependency on composite parts is not an

impossibility; that created entities subsist in the essence of allah; that the Quran is originated, Allah speaking it after its nonexistence; that He speaks, falls silent, and originates in His essence the volitions according to created things, in the process arriving at the necessary pre-eternity of the world by stating that there is no beginning for created entities. So he claimed the existence of 'originated entities without beginning' and that the attribute of pre-eternity was created, and that the created was without beginning. None ever held these two doctrines at one and the same time in any society nor in any religious community, so he is not part of any of the seventy-three sects into which the Ummah split, nor can there be any ground for him to stand with any particular Ummah. And even if all this constitutes the foulest disbelief yet it is little compared to what he innovated in the branches!"

Ibn Taymiyya's incredulity of Imam Ahmad's Fatwa on Tabarruk with the Prophetic Grave

Imam Badr al-Din al-Ayni said in his monumental commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari: "Our Shaykh Zayn al-Din said the hadith master Abu Saeed ibn Al – Alai said: I saw in an old volume on the sayings of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal countersigned by Ibn Nasir (al-Din) and other Hadith masters that Imam Ahmad was asked about the kissing of the grave of the prophet (PBUH) and his pulpit, and he replied, "There is nothing wrong with that." We showed it to Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah. He was astonished at this and began saying – "I wonder! I consider Ahmad too great! He said this? These are his words???"

His denial of Tawassul and His Denial of Such Denial

Among the grave charges brought against Ibn Taymiyyah was his denial of the lawfulness and validity of tawassul or seeking an intermediary through the Prophet (PBUH) after his lifetime as he forwarded in al-Tawassul wal Wasila and his Fatawa, and as he quoted above from Ibn Tulun citing al-Ala'i and Ibn Hajar citing al-Tufi, among others. This unprecedented denial is explicitly contradicted by the Scholars before and after him, beginning with Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and including Ibn Taymiyyah's own defenders, Ibn al-Qayyim (Nuniyya – section on Tawassul) and al-Dhahabi as well as al-Shawkani and countless others. Yet Ibn Rajab relates a contradictory position of Ibn Taymiyyah in which all he denied was 'asking help' (istagatha) in the sense of worship, however one may make tawassul through him!

Al-Kawthari's Scathing Exposure of His Anthropomorphism

The Renewer of Islam in the previous century, Imam Muhammad Zahid al – Kawthari, stated in strong terms that Ibn Taymiyya's position on the Divine attributes is tantamount to disbelief and apostasy because it reduces Allah to be a corporeal body. He states in his Maqalat.

In his book (the laying of the foundation: a refutation of al-Razi's – the foundation of divine sanctification) Ibn Taymiyyah says: "Al-arsh (the throne) lexically means al-sarir (elevated seat or couch) so named with respect to what is on top of it, just as the roof is so named with respect to what is under it. Therefore, if the Quran attributes a throne to Allah, it is known that this throne is, with respect to Allah, like the elevated seat is with respect to other than Allah. This makes it necessarily true that He is on top of the throne." So then the throne is, for Ibn Taymiyyah, the seat (maqad) for Allah – Exalted is He far beyond such a notion!

He also says: "It is well-known that the Book, the Sunnah, and the consensus nowhere say that all bodies (ajsam) are created, and nowhere say that Allah himself is not a body. Nor did any of the Imams of the Muslims every say such a thing. Therefore if I also choose not to say it, it does not expel me from fitra nor from the Sharia. These words are complete impudence. What did he do with all the verses declaring Allah to be far removed from anything like Unto Him? Does he expect that the idiocy that every single idiot can come up with be addressed with a specific text? Is it not enough that Allah said: There is nothing whatsoever like Him (42:11)? Or does he consider it permissible for someone to say: Allah eats this, chews that and tastes this just because no text mentions the opposite? This is disbelief laid bare and pure anthropomorphism.

In another passage of the same book he confronts the Asharis for not affirming a certain direction for Allah and their belief regarding Allah not being pointed as an object of sensory perception. He claims that these are heretic statements even though they are the most logical thing to do as it does not promote anthropomorphism.

He also claims that negation to accept the literal meaning of ambiguous verses is apostasy even if they have corporeality within them.

In another book of his, Muwafaqat al-Maqul, which is in the margin of Minhaj, Ibn Taymiyyah asserts that things occur newly in relation to Allah and that He has a direction according to two kinds of conjecture. And you know, reader, what the Imams say concerning him who deliberately and intently establishes that Allah has a direction, unless his saying such a thing is a slip of a tongue or a slip of the pen. Then there is his

establishing that the concept of movement applies to Allah, along with all the others who establish such a thing.

In his article, Al Tadhir al Umma min Duaat al Wathaniyya reprinted in his Maqalat, al-Kawthari berates Al-Azhar for allowing the publication of Uthman ibn Said al Darimi which contains phrases like – Allah moves if he wishes, descends and ascends if he wishes - stands and sits if he wishes; Allah has a limit and His place also has a limit, as He is on his Throne above His Heavens and these are two limits; if He wished, He would have settled on the back of a gnat" and other enormities. This is identical to Ibn Karram's doctrine that "Allah has a body unlike bodies, and a limit." Yet Ibn Taymiyya ardently defends al-Darimi's views. Citing them time and again in al Tasis Radd Asas al-Taqdis – an all out attack on Fakhr al Din al Razi's refutation of anthropomorphism titled Asas al Taqdis – including the gnat remarked."

Ibn Taymiyya's belief in the Jahanam burning out and it not being eternal is even refuted by Ibn Abi al Izz (a huge admirer of Ibn Taymiyyah) and a Salafi who has done an embarrassing commentary on AqeedatulTahawiyyah (the creed of all muslims written by Imam Tahawi – a Hanafi scholar). He has written in his Aqeedah Book that Jahanam is eternal in contrary to Ibn Taymiyyah's belief.

The belief of the consensus of the Muslims is that a disobedient muslim will be in Jahaanam temporarily whereas a disbeliever will be in Jahaanam eternally.

Furthermore, he created the kalam innovations of splitting Tawhid into two types: Tawhif rububiyyah and Tawhid uluhiyya. This is a concept that Salafis follow and it is an innovation refuted by many scholars such as the Algerian Shaykh Al-Arabi ibn al-Tubbani

Ibn Taymiyya's Verbose Methodology in Disputation

According to Salafis - disputing, debating and arguing is an innovation (look at creed of al-Babahari) despite the Prophet (PBUH) and most of the Salaf taking part in debating . Even, Ibn Taymiyyah took part in this act. Ibn Taymiyyah's method in debate was to provide a barrage of quotes and citations in support of his positions. In the process, he often mentioned reports or stated positions which, upon closer examination, are dubious either from the viewpoint of transmission or that of content. For example:

- He uses the gospel in favour of his opinion "Our lord who art though in the heavens" . His evidence for doing this is his belief of the gospel and the torah being unchanged.

- His report of Ibn Batta's narration whereby Hammad Ibn Zayd was asked by a man "Our lord descends to the heaven of the earth – does that mean he removes himself from one place to another?" Hammad replies "He Himself is in His place and He comes near his creation in a way He likes." Aside from the questionable status of Ibn Batta, the doctrine of attributing place to Allah is unheard of among the Salaf.

- His report that Ishaq ibn Rahuyah said to Abdullah ibn Tahir: "He is able to descend without the Throne being vacant of Him." Such a statement leaves nothing of the characteristics of creatures except it attributed them to the creator; body, place, surface and displacement.

- Al Bayhaqi in al-Asma wal Sifat narrates the reports of Ishaq's encounter with the Emir Abdullah ibn Tahir with five chains – three of them sound – none of which mention the words "without the Throne being vacant of him". This apparent interpolation is nevertheless the foundation of Ibn Taymiyyah's position in Sharh Hadith al-Nuzul that Allah Most High descends 'in person' yet remains above the Throne 'in person'. The phrase was characterised by Muhammad Abu Zahra as a dual assertion of the aboveness and the belowness of Allah on the part of Ibn Taymiyyah himself in Minhaj al-Sunna and by Al-Albani who defends the latter against Abu Zahra's conclusion in his introduction to Mukhtasar al Uluw.

- His report from Abu Umar al-Talamanki's book al-Wusul ila Marifat al Usul: "Ahlus-Sunnah are in agreement that Allah is above the heaven in person and is established over his throne in the mode that pleases him." Of course this assertion is are false since no such consensus exists; and the position of Ahl-us-Sunna is that whoever attributes place to Allah commits apostasy.

- His statement: "The scholars approved by Allah and His accepted Friends have narrated that Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) will be seated by His Lord on the throne next to Him. By "the scholars approved by Allah and his accepted friends." He means a minority of Hanbali scholars with anthropomorphist leanings.

- His claims regarding the narrations of Abdullah ibn Khalifa from Hadhrat Umar whereby "the Prophet (PBUH) glorified Allah and said: 'Verily, His seat of authority (kursi) encompasses the heavens and the earth, and verily he sits on it and there does not

remain of it but a space of four fingers, and verily it groans like the sound of a new saddle when one mounts it, due to the weight pressing down on it." That 'most of Ahl-us-Sunnah accept this narration' when there near totality – including his students (al-dhahabi [scrutiniser of hadith transmissions] and Ibn Kathir) grade it munkar (denounced) and he himself acknowledges Abu Bakr al-Ismaili's rejection of it among others.

- His statement that "I don't know any of the Salaf of the community, nor any Imams, neither Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal nor other than him, considered these [verses on the Divine Names and attributes] as part of the mutashabihah" when everyone has heard the statement of Imam Malik on istiwa whereby 'its modality is inconceivable'. Al-Baghdadi in Usool al-Din cites Imam Malik ibn Anas, the seven jurists of Madinah, and al-Asmai among those who consider the verses of istiwa one of the mutashabihat. Imam al-Ghazzali also counted the verses and narrations on the Divine Attributes among the mutashabihaat in al-Mustafa and Imam al-Nawawi concurred with him."

- His statements: "The elevation of Allah over the Throne is literal, and the elevation of the creature over the ship is literal." "Allah is literally with his creation and he is above His Throne literally."

 Abu Zahra wrote regarding this.

 "It is strange that Ibn Taymiyyah gets so terribly angry at those who interpret those texts [on the Divine attributes] figuratively [....] yet he considers all the names transmitted about the delights of Paradise to be figurative! [.....] Everyone can see that even if the Companions kept mute about that matter, nevertheless, the denial of figurative interpretation was not transmitted from them; and even if the expressions that are narrated indicate resignation, nevertheless, there is no affirmation of direction in the expressions that are narrated."

His climbing down the pulpit to illustrate the divine descent

The above statement support Ibn Hajar's and Ibn Battuta's reports that Ibn Taymiyyah once climbed down the minbar in purported illustration of the descent of Allah to the nearest heaven, saying: "Just like this descent of mine!" Ibn Battuta (d.770) said he witnessed Ibn Taymiyyah preach this in his Rihla. Furthermore, Ibn Hajar's citation of al-Tufi is proof that Ibn Battuta is not only the contemporary to attribute this statement to Ibn Taymiyya.

Therefore, it is likely the discrepancy is due to a simple inaccuracy and not, as claimed with typical elegance by one of the Wahhabis in his Sharh Qasidat Ibnul Qayyim, “the fabrication, by Allah, of a shameless liar!”

His Appearance

Al-Dhahabi said:

“He was poor and possessed no property. His clothes were those of a common jurist; a wide-sleeved floating robe (farajiyya), an overcoat (dilq), a thirty dirham turban (imama) and cheap shoes. His hair was cut. He was medium-sized and wide-shouldered. His eyes seemed two eloquent tongues.”

The Revival of His Teachings by the Salafi Movement

Ibn Taymiyya’s burial was attended by thousands of people. His teachings were by and large forgotten until Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab al-Najdi brought them back from oblivion. Later the ‘Salafi’ movement revived them through a large-scale publication campaign backed up by political and financial activism from the 1930s to our day.

Imam Muhammad Abu Zahra said in his book on the history of the madhahib in Islam:

The “Salafis” and Ibn Taymiyyah assert that settledness takes place over the throne. Ibn Taymiyyah strenuously asserts that Allah descends, and can be above (fawq) and below (taht) “without how” and that the school of the salaf is the affirmation of everything that the Quran stated concerning fawqiyyah and tahtiyyah (aboveness and belowness) and establishment over the throne.”

The Wahhabis appeared in the Arabian Desert and revived the School of Ibn Taymiyyah. The founder of the Wahhabbiya/Salafism is Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab who died in 1786. He had studied the books of Ibn Taymiyyah which became inestible in his sight, deepening his involvement with them until he brought them from the realm of the opinion into the realm of practice. In reality, the Wahhabis did not add anything to what Ibn Taymiyya had asserted but they exaggerated it beyond his intent, instituting practical matters which Ibn Taymiyyah had not addressed because they were not widespread in his time. These can be summarised thus:

1) They did not worship (ibada) in the same way that Islam had stipulated in the Quran and Sunnah and as Ibn Taymiyyah had. Rather, they included customs (adat) into the province of Islam so that Muslims would be bound by them as well. Thus, they declared cigarette smoking haram and exaggerated this ruling to the point that their general public considered the smoker a mushriks. As a result they resembled the Khawarij who used to declare apostate whoever committed a sin.

2) In the beginning of their movement they would also declare coffee and whatever resembled it haram and themselves but it seems that they became more indulgent as time went by.

3) The Wahhabis did not restrain themselves to proselytism alone, but resorted to warmongering against whoever disagreed with them. They did so on the grounds that they were fighting innovations and innovations are an evil that must be fought, and it is obligatory to command good and forbid evil. The leader of the Wahhabi thought in the field of war and battle was Muhammad Ibn Saud, the ancestor of the ruling Saudi family in the Arabian lands. He was a brother in law to Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and embraced his school of thought, defending it fervently and calling unto it by force of arms. He announced that he was doing this so as to uphold the Sunnah and eradicate Bidah. Perhaps, this religious mission that turned violent doubled as a rebellion against Ottoman rule. Then the governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, faced them and pounced on the Salafis with his formidable army, routing them in the course of several battles. At that time their military force was reduced and confined to the Arab tribes. Riyadh and its vicinity were the centre for this permanent dawah that would turn violent whenever they gathered strength and lie still whenever they found violent opposition.

4) Whenever they were able to seize a town or city they would come to the tombs and turn them into desolate ruins [.....] and they would destroy whatever mosques were with the tombs also.

5) Their brutality did not stop there. They also came to whatever graves were visible and similarly destroyed them. When the ruler of the Hijaz regions (Makkah and Medinah) caved into them they destroyed all the graves of the companions and razed them to the ground.

6) They would harp on small matters which they condemned even though these matters had nothing to do neither with idolatry nor

with whatever leads to idolatry, such as photography. We found this in their fatwas and epistles at the hands of their Ulama, although their rulers ignore this saying of theirs completely and cast it by the wayside.

7) They expanded the meaning of bidah to strange proportions, to the point that they actually claimed that draping the walls of the noble Rawda is an innovated matter. Hence they forbade the renewal of the drapes that were in it, until they fell in tatters and became unsightly, were it not for the the light that pours out to all that are in the presence of the prophet or feel that in this place was the abode of Revelation on the Matter of the Messengers. In fact, we find among them, in addition to this, those who consider that the Muslims expression “our liege-lord (sayyiduna) Muhammad” is an impermissible bidah. They show true extremism about this, and for the sake of their mission, use foul language until most people actually flee from them as far as they can.

8) In truth, the Salafis and Wahabis have actualised the opinions of Ibn Taymiyyah and are extremely zealous followers and supporters of those views. They adopted the positions of Ibn Taymiyya which we explained in our discussion of those who call themselves the Salafiyya. However, they enlarged the meaning of bidah and construed as innovations things that have no relation to worship. In fact it has been noticed that the Ulama of the Salafis consider their own opinions of others wrong and not possibly the way of erecting tombs and circumambulating them close to idolatry. In this respect, they are like the Khawarij who used to declare those who dissented with them apostate and fight them as we have already mentioned. This was a relatively harmless matter in the days when they were cloistered in the desert and not trespassing its boundaries; but when they mixed with others and the lands of Hijaz fell into the hands of the Saud family, the matter became of the utmost gravity. This is why the late King Abdul Aziz of the Saud family opposed them, and treated their opinions as confined to themselves and irrelevant to others.”

Al Nabhani’s verdict on Ibn Taymiyyah

Al Qadi Yusuf Al-Nabhani said in Shawahid al Haqq that he saw in his dream that Ibn Taymiyyah had been forgiven but that he was in a lower level of Paradise than Taqi al-Din al-Subki. He never declared Ibn Taymiyyah a disbeliever nor did any of the reliable Ulama of Ahl-e-

Sunnah. May Allah forgive them, take us back to Him as Muslim and join us with His righteous servants. Ameen.

May Allah forgive Ibn Taymiyyah for his shortcomings and raise him amongst the great Ulama. It reflects on the Arabic proverb that 'the mistakes of the great people are great'.

Tajseem (anthropormorphism)

What is the true creed of the salaf (pious predecessors regarding the ambiguous attributes of Allah within the Quran? We must first establish the types of qualities and attributes (sifaat) which are mentioned within the Quran.

Sifaat (attributes) are of three types:

i. Sifaat Aqaliya – those attributes through a person's intellect he can believe and acknowledge. For example: Allah being Qadeer (all powerful), Baseer (All-seeing), Aleem (all knowing). Our intellect allows us to understand these as a person can't contemplate a god who is not powerful, blind or deaf. This is why this is called sifaat aqaliya.

ii. Sifaat Khabariya – those attributes which the intellect cannot understand but it has been mentioned in Quran and Hadith. For example: the hand of Allah, the shin of allah, the foot of allah and Allah being above the throne. These attributes can't be understood as literal as a person can't comprehend these attributes. The only reason we accept it is due to it being mentioned in Quran and Hadith.

iii. Sifaat Ma'nawi – for example: Allah being happy, Allah laughing, Allah being angry.

The type of Sifaat we will focus on are the Sifaat Khabariya.

The true creed of the salaf (pious predecessors) regarding this, according to the Quran, Sunnah of the Rasul (PBUH), Ijma (consensus) of the Ummah and quotes of eminent scholars, is to do tafweedh (consign and relegate the meaning of the attributes to Allah) and nafiyul kayf (to deny modality and howness). The belief and doctrine of the Sahaba, 4 imams, the muhadithoon, the mutakalimoon, mufasiroon and all the pious predecessors is that the howness and modality is denied and the meaning is consigned to Allah.

Many evidences will be given for this so no doubt will remain. Tafweedh is a word also used in the Quran in the meaning of surrendering. So, we surrender the meaning to Allah and we make him the hakim and the judge of the meaning regarding the attributes. We accept the words to be true however we leave the meaning for Allah. This is the creed of the Salaf.

The Salafis, on the other hand, claim that the attributes of Allah are known. They establish the meaning of the hand, the shin, the eye and so on to be literal and true. These people claim that this is the true creed of the Salaf and they propagate this belief. Many people now believe this misconception which was spread by the Salafis regarding the physical attributes of Allah to be literal – Exalted is Allah beyond their claims!

The fact of the matter is that this ideology was pioneered by Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. Despite the consensus of the Ummah respecting Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Hafiz Ibnul Qayyim for their vast amount of knowledge and their high status within Islam, nevertheless we believe them to have stumbled upon this issue in regards to Aqeedah. The scholars at that time and up till now have made everyone aware of this.

Ibn Taymiyyah regarding Tafweedh (relegating the meaning of the attributes to Allah) which is the true creed of the scholars. He has written regarding tafweedh – “that [tafweedh] is the worst statements of the Ahle-Bidah and those people who are heretics.” – this is what he said regarding the true creed of the Salaf. Even Bin Baaz on his commentary of Ibn Taymiyyah’s Aqeedatul Wasatiyya said that there is a necessity for tafweedh.

We can not take these attributes in the literal meaning because automatically a person will form a body for Allah. This is why many people have fallen inside anthropomorphism (ascribing human qualities to Allah).

These Sifaat (attributes) are from the ambiguous and vague verses. There are two types of verses Allah has revealed in the holy Quran.

1) Muhkamat (clear cut and explicit)

2) Mutashabihat (ambiguous and vague)

Allah speaks about these types of verses in the Quran: “It was Allah who revealed to you the book which contains muhkamat (clear) and these are the essence of the Quran, and the others are ambigious and for

those who have crookedness in their hearts try and inteprate these verse."

If we claim Allah has a hand, it will immediately refer to skin and flesh. This is a deviance which Muslims need to be stay away from.

Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali has mentioned "The verses narrated regarding Sifaat Khabariya, (hand of allah, shin of allah etc.) these are from the ambigious verses."

Allamah Ibn Qudamah Al-Hanbali states: "The attributes of Allah (sifaat khabariya) are related and are from the ambiguous verses."

If someone has a belief/doctrine/creed, it need to have clear-cut and explicit verses for evidences in order for their belief to be accepted in the Shariah.

Imam Shatibi (famous scholar of Qiraat) mentions in Al-itisam "The Ulama have known that every evidence that has vagueness and ambiguity it is not evidence in reality. This is the reality. Whoever does contrary to this, he has crossed limits. He has entered in the ruling of being blamed and criticised and going after vague verses is reprehensible and blameworthy [it is not acceptable]. If discussing these verses is reprehensible, then how can we use them as evidence? To even make the basis of Shariah using ambiguous verses is not accepted. To do so is a bidah and this is the truth."

Majmoo al Fatawa (by Ibn Taymiyyah) in Volume 2 Page 54, he mentioned – "Allah is free from body parts and these body parts which he is free from are those of eating and drinking and Allah has body parts and these body parts are used for completing actions."

Is this the belief of the pious predecessors?

Ibn Taymiyyah in Volume 7 of Majmu-Al-Fatawa says "Allah is sitting on his throne and he has left a space of four fingers all the way around the throne."

In Volume 8, Page 403 in Majmu-Al-Fatawa that "the most authentic opinion is Allah is sitting on his arsh and there is no space of four fingers". – This narration suggests that the throne is bigger than Allah.

In Majmu Al Fatawa in Volume 3 he has written "Allah is sitting on his throne."

In hope of proving this anthropomorphic Aqeedah, in his book Bayyan Talbeesil Jahmiyya Volume 1 Page 558 he went to the extent of saying

“If Allah wanted and wished, he could sit and settle on the back of a gnat/mosquito.”

He uses this as an argument of supporting his view of Allah sitting on the arsh (throne).

Where is Allah? – regarding this question. As Muslims we believe location does not encompass Allah. However, Ibn Taymiyyah has written in his book on Al-Fatwa Al-Hamratul Kubra Page 79 that “Allah is literally with us and is on the throne literally.”

We don’t want to expose the Aqeedah of Ibn Taymiyyah, rather we want to stop others following in his mistakes.

Hafiz Ibnul Qayyim has written in his book Ijtima Juloosul Islam “The prophet (PBUH) will find Allah sitting on his throne.” He has quoted it from Musnad Ahmad. However, he has forged the word ‘sitting’ (jails) in this Hadith.

Ibn Taymiyyah has also forged the word ‘jalis’ in Volume 1 page 135 in Majmoo-Al-Fatawa.

In the commentary of Sharhul Aqeedatul Wasatiyya on Page 157 by Shaykh Uthaymeen – Ibn Uthaymeen says regarding the verse “wherever you turn you will find the (wajh) countenance of Allah.” He has said the most authentic opinion is to translate wajh as face and he has said that the literal face of Allah is everywhere.

Shaykh Bin Baaz in his book (page 69) , whilst refuting Shaykh Sabuni, mentions that the opinion of Al-Sabuni is reprehensible as it is not the way of Ahlus Sunnah. Al-Sabuni’s opinion was that Allah does not have a literal tongue, eye, hand, foot and so on.

Hafiz Ibul Qayyim has written a poem to prove Allah is sitting on the throne – Allah is sitting on his throne and he is gonna make the prophet (PBUH) sit on the throne and we shouldn’t deny this.

The excuse he uses is that ‘we only deny what allah has denied for himself’. So don’t we deny illness, deficiencies and disabilities for Allah as he has not denied them? As we can see, Salafis have a flawed Aqeedah. May Allah have mercy upon him.

In the 11th Ayah of Surah Al-Shuarah: “Nothing resembles Allah in any way”. This Quran ayah refutes their claims.

It is absurd for a human to imagine allah to have hunger, thirst and illness. In the same way, it is absurd for a human to imagine Allah to have body parts.

Imam Razi has mentioned that an anthropomorphist never actually truly worships Allah; rather he worships the image of Allah in his mind.

They take the words and the meanings to be literal therefore fall inside Tajseem. As Muslims, we accept the words to be literal (dhahir-lafz) as we are commanded to have faith (imaan on this). If we were to deny the words, we would be denying the Quraan. However, we believe the meanings to be figurative and metaphorical.

So we do accept the apparent word but don't accept the apparent meaning as this suggests howness and modality for Allah.

An example of dhahir lafz (apparent word) being utilised instead of dhahir maana (apparent meaning) is when Allah refers to the prophet as 'raufun raheem' [the compassionate, the merciful]. This is in regards to the words and not the meaning as this quality is exclusive to Allah.

Imam Khatabi has mentioned "that our scholars are afraid to speak about the the sifaat khabariya, they have accepted the apparent words but not the apparent meaning. They have consigned the meaning to Allah."

Allamah Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri has said the biggest calamity with attributes is to believe them to have literal meanings.

Imam Badrudeen Ibn Jamaah has said: "Whoever plagiarises the statement of the Salaf and then makes a statement with anthropomorphism which Allah (which he is free from as these are the attributes of the creation) then this person is a liar as this has nothing to do with the Salaf."

Imam ibn Hajar Al-asqalani has written in fathal bari in Volume 3 regarding the hadith "Allah descends to the skies of the earth." – 'there are many people who have taken this hadith literally and they are anthropomorphist – Allah is exalted and above what they say.'

Imam Razi in his Tafseer Kabeer regarding 'istiwa': "There is evidence suggesting that it is impossible for Allah to be inside a place, that is why we can't take the literal meaning of this and by saying Allah is literally on the throne suggests that he is uplifted by eight angels (as suggested by the Quran Ayah which reveals 8 angels supporting the throne)"

He goes on to say: “The apparent meaning is impossible to take so we consign the meaning of Allah – to take the apparent meaning is against the consenus of the Ummah.”

Imam Shawkani says that those who criticise those who don’t take the apparent meanings are usually the anthropormorphists.

Sifaat is of two types:

1) Kamila (complete and pure from deficiencies)

 For example: Allah being Qadeer (all-powerful)

2) With deficiencies

 For example: “Allah will forget people as they forget this day.” – this verse shows a deficiency however it is used as a metaphor to show emphasis as Allah can never forget as proved within the Quran. “Allah never forgets.”

For all attributes, there is a general meaning and a specific meaning.

For Sifaat Aqalia (Qadeer) we do this but for Sifaat Khabaria we assert it to a specific meaning. As Sifaat Aqalia can be understood from the Quraan, Ahadith and our intellect (aql), whereas, Sifaat Khabaria can only be contemplated from Quran and Sunnah but not from our intellect.

Ibn Khaldoun has said regarding the attributes of Allah in Tareekh of Imam Ibn Khaldoun that: “Allah has many attributes regarding him, in some places he has written regarding him being all-powerful, all seeing, all-hearing and so on and so forth – whereas, in other places he has talked about eyes, hands and shin. The Salaf, from the Sahaba and the Tabieen, have only established the Sifaat of Aqalia and those regarding the attributes of body parts we have remained quiet regarding this and we have left the howness and consigned it to Allah.”

In examples of Allah mentioning Sifaat Aqalia within the Quraan such as Allah being all powerful, Allah has mentioned these attributes specifically and exclusively. Whereas, Sifaat Khabaria are inclusive and hidden within the purpose. For example, when talking about Nuh (PBUH), Allah says that he is under our eyes. The purpose and subject of this verse is regarding Nuh (PBUH) and not the ‘eyes’. The topic was Nuh and ‘eyes’ was inclusive. Many of the scholars have interpreted ‘eyes’ to mean protection as a metaphorical statement and a use of allegory. Even Shaykh Bin Baaz agrees with this statement!

Salafis say that Tafwidh is ignorance; rather it is the safest thing to do.

Copious overwhelming evidences have been provided in favour of tafwidh.

Allah himself has negated himself like being anything like us by saying in Surah Al-Shuarah Verse 11 – “Nothing resembles Allah in any way”.

Imam Qurtubi in his book Tafseer al-Qurtubi – “there is no comparison between Allah and his creation in the literal meaning.”

Imam Razi has written in Tafseer al Kabeer Volume 27 – “Ulama of Tawheed and Aqeedah, the former and the latter, that Allah is free from body parts and limbs.” Shaykh Fawdhan and Shaykh Ibn Baaz have mentioned Allah has body limbs but they have been refuted by so many great scholars.

Salafis have said that Allah has limbs but Allah’s ‘limbs’ differ from the limbs of a human being. They give the example of an ants leg and an elephants leg – both have the same purpose but differ in image. However, despite the image, size and colour of the leg being different they are all the same in the essence of being a limb and being asserted to a certain task. This is what we negate for Allah as Allah is free from body limbs. If the qualities are different, the essence is all body-limbs which Allah is free from.

Salafis are contradicting this verse by saying this.

In Surah Ikhlaas, the first verse – “Say Allah is One” The word ‘Ahad’ is utilised as it means one/singular and not completed through any parts, just complete as a whole. Whereas, ‘wahid’ denotes parts. As well as this, the second verse of the same Surah states “He who is independent.” By giving Allah a limb you are inadvertently making him dependent on that body-part despite Allah being independent of anything and everything. It is now clear that the belief of tajseem affects their Aqeedah and Tawheed.

Imam Ibn Hajr in Fathal Bari in Volume 13 has mentioned in page 444, 25 different meanings for the word hand. He has mentioned that the literal meaning of a hand is a body part made from flesh. The other meanings are figurative meanings of blessings,power etc.

Salafis won’t take the metaphorical meaning as they believe it is tahrif (distortion) so they are forced to take the literal meaning which means ‘a body limb’. Every single dictionary on the face of this earth will state that a hand is a body limb made of blood and flesh.

It says in the Quran: “Do not make comparison [andada] for Allah.” By giving Allah a hand, you are creating equality which is not befitting of Allah.

Ghani (independent) is a name for Allah also. This shows that he cannot be dependent on limbs.

Imam Juwayni has written that ‘the sahaba would leave the meanings for Allah and they would concise the meaning to Allah.’ If the best people after the prophets did this then shouldn’t we? Their Aqeedah has been made mandatory for us to follow as suggested by the Quran and Sunnah.

He goes on to say: “There is no need to contemplate the meaning of these attributes, rather we should leave them as Allah has not obligated us to understand these and we can still bring belief upon them without knowing the meaning. To have faith of something that is unknown is correct as Allah has told us to bring faith on the angels, prophets and books – understanding the detail of the meaning is not required in Imaan (faith).”

Imam Ibn Qudama on page 363 of his book damul-tawil that “all the sahaba have unanimously agreed to leave the interpretation – and those who came after have explicitly mentioned that it is necessary to do tafweedh – they would pass through them without explaining a literal meaning towards these. The attributes of Allah cannot be understood through intellect. The intellect can only understand things in which it sees and we cannot see Allah.”

Imam Razi has transmitted a consensus of the Sahabah regarding the ambiguous verses, that the sahaba would leave the meaning by consigning them to Allah.

As we can understand the correct position is to consign the meaning to Allah and deny the modality and howness.

Imam Abu Hanifa has written in Al Fiqh al-Akbar (page 64 and 66) that “Allah is an entity like no other.” He goes on to say: “Allah has no limit, no opposite, no equal and no peer.” Mulla Ali Qari has said regarding this that these statements are regarding those who take Sifaat Khabariya literally.

Sufyan Thawri has written in Al-Uluw (page 146) – “The Salaf did not do tafseer on the ambiguous verses [regarding sifaat khabariya]”.

Imam at-Tahawi has written the correct opinion on the direction and location of Allah by stating that no location and direction encompass him in his infamous Aqidatul-Tahawiyyah.

Imam Tirmidhi accepted the Hadith but denied giving the howness. The Salafis, to the contrary, establish the literal meaning which no one has done apart from Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibnul Qayyim.

Imam al-Dhahabi has mentioned that Imam Malik Ibn Anas used to say "pass through them without explanation". Imam Malik also interpreted the hadith regarding Allah ascending to mean the command of Allah descending and not Allah literally.

Sufyan Bin Uyayna said "to recite these attributes [in the quran] is the tafseer". This goes to show the commentary of these verses is not necessary but affirming believe in the words are.

Imam Dhahabi has quoted Abdullah Ibn Zubair Al-Humaydi in Tadhkiratul Hufaaz Volume 2 Page 214 that: 'Allah's Sifaat; we will not increase or explain anything, we will stop where the Quran and Sunnah stops."

In the Quran chapter 19, verse 65 Allah asks a rhetorical question in order to make us contemplate. In addition, it is a negation to any equality between Him and us. Allah says: "do you know any similarity to him?"

It is said in the Quran: "*There faces will be illuminated looking up to their lord".* It uses the word Nazira to describe the 'looking' of humans. And within the quran the word 'baseer' is used to describe Allah. The difference in meaning is that Nazira means to see without comprehension whereas baseer means to see, understand and comprehend. This goes to show that Allah is 'baseer' and we are 'nazira'. How can we possibly use the same limb to achieve this goal? This arguement is further supported by the verse in the Quran (Chapter 7 Verse 198) saying that "they will look upon (yanzuru-nazira) towards Him but they won't see (yabsuru-baseer) ." How can humans and god have the same limb but with a different task? If the purpose of the limb is different and Allah is able to do a task we can't, then is he in need of a limb?

Shaykh Yasir Al-Hanafi has collected over 100 quotes of the consensus of the Ummah regarding this. It can be seen on The Hanafi Fiqh Channel [YouTube] in the 'True Creed of the Salaf' Episode 4.

The consensus of the Muslims believes in the status elevation of allah but not the sensory elevation (allah sitting on his throne).

Ibn Taymiyya – Bayyan Talbisil Jahmiyya whilst refuting Ibn Abu Yaala al-Hanbali (who believes Allah has only one direction – tahtiyya [beneath]), claims that Allah has all 6 directions – up ,down ,left ,right ,backwards and forwards. The correct belief is that direction does not encompass Allah.

Allamah Dhahabi has posed a question: “that intellect by itself cannot indicate Allah being above the throne which he created with his being, then where was he before the throne?” If the throne was always there, this goes against the hadith which states that ‘Allah existed and there was nothing apart from him”.

Imam Khatabi: “Our opinion of Allah is that he is not touching or sitting on the arsh, rather we believe the Hadith as it comes and don’t question [we stop].”

Salafis translate the word ‘istiwa’ to mean sitting. In the quran it says: “The most merciful did istiwa on the throne.” In Lisaan al Arab (an Arabic dictionary) the word istiwa has over 14 different meanings.

Someone Imam Malik asked Imam Malik regarding the word Istiwa. He replied: Istiwa is known and the howness is unknown when related to Allah and asking is an innovation so you are an innovator – get out of my sight. It is said that Imam Malik’s veins were bulging and he became drenched in sweat.

Hafiz ibn Jawzi Al Hanbali in his book Al Baz al Ashar has narrated that “Allah sitting on his throne has not been narrated from any of the pious predecessors.” The only person to transmit such a hadith was Ibn Qayyim who forged the word ‘juloos’ (sitting) into the Hadith.

Imam Ibn Abdul Baar in his book Al-istizdhkaar Volume 2 page 540 “A group of people, claiming to follow the Sunnah, claimed that Allah has descended – this notion is rejected as Allah is free from movement and harakat. In his book tamheed (Volume 7 Page 144) that “to say Allah is above the throne in his being is against the Aqidah of Ahlus-Sunnah and Allah is free from howness.”

If Allah descends to the skies, can’t he manage the affairs of the skies whilst being on the throne. This is a question posed to the salafis who assert location for Allah. It is well known within the Hadith that ‘Allah descends to the skies at the latter part of the night.’ Now, everywhere in the world [at least somewhere] it is the latter part of the night, so is Allah always in the skies. It is also well known that Allah is much vaster than all his creation; so does he go smaller once entering his creation [the sky]. Nauzoobillah.

Imam Tabari (in his tafseer) volume 1 page 229 that “Allah is elevated upon the throne, the elevation of Kingdom and Power, not the elevation of movement and appearance.” This supports status elevation and not sensory elevation.

Allah is free from framework and body parts and directions and limits. The six directions do not encompass him like for all his creations.

We come to know that the earth is a sphere like shape. Those who claim Allah is above in the north-pole will have a different ‘above’ to the people living in the south-pole. So if allah is directly above, then from which direction? This is another question that the Salafis have failed to answer.

Aqeedatul Tahawiyya is accepted by almost everyone in the Muslim world as being the Aqeedah of ahlus-sunnah. It is taught in Medina, Makkah, Deoband, Al-Azhar etc. Even the salafis accept it to be true despite it contradicting their beliefs on Istiwa and asserting direction to Allah. Therefore they have employed their own ‘scholars’ to do a commentary on it which totally goes against some of the main beliefs stated inside it. Shaykh Bin Baz criticised it as being ambiguous and he disagreed with the statement of Allah having no boundaries or limits. Despite, Imam Tahawi clearly stating each point explicitly.

Ibn Zaghuni has said “It is necessary for allah to have a limit and an end.” – a quote referenced by Shaykh Bin Baz. Imam Ibn Jawzi said in refutation of this – ‘this person doesn’t know what he’s talking about- this is a statement of ignorance and pure anthropomorphism’

Salafis agree that believing in the concept of al-hulool (Allah indwelling within creation) is a misguidance, deviance and an innovation. But when considering that Allah created direction and the throne and the skies – and in order for him to encompass them he must indwell in them; this goes to show that they even contradict themselves in regards to Aqeedah. How can you trust such people?

Imam Ibn Jawzi says that these people do not know the vastness of the Arabic language and he gives the example of these people who take the literal meaning of these attributes. Example: a mother said to her child ‘look after the door’. He took the door of the hinges and started walking around with it. She said to him ‘O son, I told you to look after the door.’ He replied – ‘Yes mother, you told me told me to look after the door; not the house.’ This goes to show that the young boy did not understand the command therefore interpreted it foolishly.

Salafis claim to take the literal meaning without doing howness. They claim that Allah has a hand but doesn’t have a limb. Imam Ibn Jawzi said

that it is like when someone is standing but it is not standing – he said ‘stay away from these people’. By doing tafweedh, is no way denying, distorting or changing the meaning of the words.

In some cases, the scholars have come to the conclusion of assigning a possible meaning for a word. For example, instead of translating the Quran ayah to mean “everything will perish except his wajh (face – literal meaning)”. The scholars have chosen to replace it with a possible word like countenance – “everything will perish except his countenance.” This is called Taweel (interpretation) and is only permissible within extreme circumstances - such as when someone’s Iman is in danger. Imam Tabari and Imam Bukhari are among the many scholars who did Taweel on this example. If we were to take the literal meaning the belief could be disastrous.

The method of the Salaf was to do tafweedh and they rarely ever did taweel except only in serious circumstances. The conditions for doing taweel are accepting that the prediction of the interpretation is zhanni (possible) and not qatii (certain). It also requires extensive research as well as approval from the consensus of the Ulama.

The example of doing taweel is given as to only doing it when necessary. Scholars have said Imaan in the Sifat Khabariyya is like a ship, once it starts drowning and flooding that is only the time it will be necessary to swim as it will be the only chance of survival. There is no need to swim when there is no serious threat posed. The action of swimming is like that of Taweel and the action of drowning is a simile of one’s imaan if they start denying the Divine attributes.

Some scholars, when doing taweel, describe the hand of allah to mean the power of allah in actual meaning. One of the evidences for this is that yad (hand) is another word used for power within the Arabic language. Furthermore, in the Quran Chapter 48 Verse 100 it is said that “the hand of allah is above their hands.” – this does not make sense literally however by exchanging the word hand for power seems more logical as it would mean “the power of allah is above their power.” Allah knows best.

Another example of taweel is for the Quran ayah that states ‘god is coming’ – scholars have interpreted that god doesn’t literally come, rather his command comes.

Another example is the taweel on a metaphorical hadith such as “When Allah loves someone so much he becomes the ears through which he hears, the eyes through which he sees...” (Sahih Bukhari). Ibn Kathir has

said in ‘tafseer kathir’ concerning this that when someone is obedient to Allah. Allah makes him only do good and what he wants.

Another example of taweel is when the prophet (PBUH) said “When someone becomes bored, Allah becomes bored.” Boredom is a deficiency and then therefore cannot be attributed to Allah. It is clear that this a metaphorical usage of words to emphasis on the actual meaning that ‘when we stop our deeds, Allah stops reward.” This is a figurative effect called Mushakala (oxymoron). It is used to show comparison. An example of an oxymoron within the English language is ‘the silence is deafening’. Silence can’t actually be deafening but it is used as a sense of hyperbole. Another example of a mushakala is ‘they plot and allah plots and allah is the best of planners/plotters.” (makr – the root word has connotations to deception which is a deficiency for Allah). As you can see, Taweel is necessary in some cases.

“[Allah] He is with you wherever you are.” – Scholars have said this could mean His knowledge is literally with you and not Allah literally.

Directions were made exclusively for human beigns. The directions for a four legged animal are different to that of a human. If we were created in a 360 degree format, in which the upward direction was everywhere, then direction would be completely different to the way we understand it. Thats why it is important not to personify God to the extent of asserting him with human like features.

Salafis use Dajjal and Firawn as proof while we use the Quran and Sunnah. They use the Hadith referring to the Dajjal being one-eyed in favour of making Allah seem to be two-eyed. Moreover, they use evidence for firawn building up towards the skies as proof to show that Allah is above. Even when Musa (PBUH) referred to Allah, he did not refer to a direction. How absurd!

Giving Allah body parts was the work of the first shia (undercover Jew) Abdullah bin Saba who claimed that Hadhrat Ali was god. Even orthodox Jews believe god to be omnipresent and nothing like humans.

Nobody denies the fact that Allah descends, but the howness is unknown. Maybe the descending is contrary to that of normal descending. As there is proof in the Quran that suggests iron and cows descended from the skies – we don’t see cows flying down from the sky in that manner – therefore Allah’s descension may be in a different manner.

Salafis believe there to be zero metaphorical aspects within the Quran. Their scholars – Fawzan and Zeeno affirm this. If we were to take things literally, it would be detrimental to our beliefs. An example of this is when Allah says: “Allah is the light of the heavens and earth.” (24:35) – this doesn’t mean Allah is literal light.

Another example is ‘He is nearer to us than our jugular vein.’ – this doesn’t mean god himself is located within our epiglottis.

There is a hadith qudsi that states... [I was hungry and you did not feed me. I was thirsty.....] – this was regarding what Allah has said and it was narrated by Abu Hurayra and it is in Saheeh Al-Bukhari. If we take the literal meaning, we would be committing disbelief as this hadith was a figure of speech.

The prophet (PBUH) said: “There is no heart except that it lies between the two fingers of the Merciful.” – this is also a figure of speech to show that Allah controls us and if he wants to guide us, he may and if he wants us to be misguided, we will surely be that way.

Allah Most High said: [“And the calf was made to sink into their hearts”] (2:93) – is this not a metaphor? Do Salafis believe cows literally sink within their hearts? The interpretation of this iss that it is a metaphor (majaz) for the love of a [golden] calf – our refuge is in Allah!

Allah Most High also said, [Unto Allah belongs the East and the West and whithersoever you turn, there is the countenance (wajh-literally means face) (2:115). The meaning of countenance is the direction of prayer (qibla).

Imam Bukhari has narrated from Ibn Abaas on the verse, [Then he turned to the heavens when it was smoke and said unto it and unto the earth, Come both of you {willingly} and {unwillingly}] The meaning of telling the earth and heavens to come is “Give All your benefits.” – as suggested by the Quranic Verse (41:11)

Imam Nawawi has said “allah is literally not in the sky.” As well as this, Ibn Abaas said regarding Allah’s kursi that “This is his knowledge.” – it is clear that he relegated the meaning for Allah.

Conditions of doing taweel are,

1) The original wording must carry the possibility, even remotely, of the interpretive meaning in a way that does not make that meaning totally alien to it.

2) There must be a compelling reason for taweel. For example, the letter of the text must somehow contravene an obligatory known, well-established and well know rule of the religion, that is, it contradicts a clear cut evidence (nass) stronger than its transmission; for example, when a hadith contradicts a verse while the hadith can be interpreted figuratively. In such a case the hadith is interpreted figuratively or even rejected.

3) The interpretation must not be unsupported but rather it must be supported and drawn from what make knowledge necessary.

Ibn Daqiq al-Id said:

If tawil is close to the language of the Arabs it is not disapproved; if far, we neither confirm nor deny it without believing its intended meaning together with upholding transcendence. Whatever is understood in those words of communication of the Arabs, we endorse it without hesitation, as in the saying of Allah Most High (Alas, my grief that I was unmindful of the side of Allah) [39:56): we say it means the right owed to Allah and what is obligatory to pay him.

The need for Tawil according to Ahlus Sunnah

Shaykh Abdul Azim Al-Zarqani said:

1) Tawil is obedience to the order we were given of assenting to the ambiguous texts (al-mutashabih) and adhering to the explicit (muhkam) while understanding the former in the light of the latter is manifest, contrary to that of the former.

2) Tawil is true and correct so that the believer does not fall into contradictions when he reads certain verses, for example, the attribution of ‘an-eye’ to Allah most high, ‘eyes’, ‘two-hands, or that He is in the heaven and in the earth, and that He is with His creation anywhere they be, and so forth.

 If we leave the texts to their apparent meaning we will fall into contradiction. This is impossible in the glorious Quran: [If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much incongruity] (4:82). However, when we exempt Allah from any resemblance whatsoever to His creation in all such texts, then resign their meaning to him, we become safe from contradictions in our understanding and make the Quran safe from any misperceived incongruity in it.

Further it makes no difference whether tawil is general or specific since it its the only way contradiction and contravention of meanings that pertain to the Divine attributes and the glorious Quraan can be avoided.

3. Tawil – whether general or specific – is the path of the pious Salaf among the companions and those after them, and these are the most proficient of all human beings in Islam after the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).
4. Tawil as followed by Ahlus Sunnah wal Jammat is the protection of the general public in particular, by Divine permission, from falling into aberrant comparisons and anthropomorphism.
5. As mentioned, recourse to specific and detailed Tawil is on the basis of need.
6. Among the preconditions of Tawil is that it must conform to the principles of the Arabic Language and rhetorical style among the Arabs. As for what does not, then such tawil is neither licit nor acceptable.

It is vital to comprehend that Tawil is not a negation of the divine attributes. Rather, it is a procedure undertaken in order to abstain from anthropomorphism and forming howness for Almighty Allah.

Even Sahaba have done Taweel,

Abdullah Ibn Abaas said regarding the verse “your lord is coming” to mean the ‘reward of your lord is coming’.

Some hadiths are unimaginable to think about as they pose a threat to our faith if we contemplate them. There are a few examples of these type of hadith:

Ibn Taymiyyah has narrated one in Page 240 in Majmu al-Fatawa “After Allah created the world, he laid down on His back and placed one leg over the other, this is why it is not permitted for any of the creation to do so.” – Ibn Taymiyyah actually believed this to be literal.

“Allah will place his foot in Jahannam and say enough, enough...” - It would be foolish for anyone to take such a hadith literally.

“Allah will bare forth his shin (saaq)....” – many scholars have done tawil of this hadith and said that saaq could mean intensity.

“The black stone is the right hand of Allah on this earth.” – this is a hadith which is obviously figurative as it is refuted by other hadiths such as ‘the black stone will testify on the day of judgement, interceding for all those who kissed it’ – suggesting that it is not literal.

“Do not curse the wind as it is the breath of Allah.” – This was narrated by Ubay ibn Kaab and many scholars do tafweedh on it.

Imam Bukhari has done tawil on the attribute of laughter. He has said it means ‘Allah’s mercy’.

The most efficient protocol within a situation where ambigious attributes are involved is to consign and relegate the meanings to Allah. In serious circumstances, you may see the possible interpretation (tawil) given by the Ulama regarding that verse.

Hadhrat Abu Bakr used to say “Inabillity to comprehend Allah god is comprehension and delving into matters regarding the essence of God is Shirk.”

Another saying of Hadhrat Abu Bakr is “Delve into the essence of people and not into the essence of Allah.”

Someone asked Imam Abu Hanifa regarding the question – Where is Allah? Imam Abu Hanifa: Allah is beyond limit and boundaries. He is far beyond body parts, limbs and instruments. He is not contained by the six directions.

An ant doesn’t understand rocket science due to its limited intellectual capacity, in the same way we cannot understand the system of Allah due to our limited knowledge. If you were to dip your finger in the ocean, the wetness on the tip of your finger is the amount of knowledge we have in comparison to the ocean which is the unveiled knowledge that we have been deprived of.

A Sahabi asked the prophet where is Allah? An ayaat was revealed 2:180; I am near when my slaves call upon me.

Imam Abu Hanifa has written in Fiqhul Asbaat that ‘location’, ‘place’, ‘area’ don’t befit or encompass Allah.

Salafis like to use the claim of a slave girl in this regard by claiming the prophet (PBUH) once asked her where is Allah? And she replied by pointing up at the sky and exclaiming in support of her indication. It is important to understand that this question was asked to her due to her limited knowledge and there were two simple options – either a) to point towards the skies – which for a layperson indicates towards the location

of God or b) indicate towards the idols. This was a test of the prophet (PBUH) to a slave girl and cannot be used as evidence.

It is ironic how these very same people claim to follow the 3 most blessed generations of the Ummah (the Salaf), yet they go against their procedures in such a predicament. Following a madhab offered a simple solution for issues such as these; now it is clear that not doing taqleed can lead you to adopt innovations such as anthropomorphism, corporeality and affirming howness and modality to Allah – Exalted is He beyond their claims.

What similarities do they have with the pious and righteous Salaf? O the delight of being affiliated to one of the Four Sunni Schools, since it is so well-know that their founders were of the Imams of the pious salaf historically, factually, reputedly and truly! Glory and Gratitude to Allah for the testimony of the Muslims of the first three centuries – among them are the experts of the Quraan, the Sunnah, the Aqeedah, the Fiqh and for the defacto testimony of their times and moral conduct – Allah Most High have mercy upon them! – and the testimony of those after the three centuries among the Ulama of the Quran,Sunnah, Aqeedah and Fiqh to our very day and until Allah wishes.

The generation of the group after the salaf (first three generations – the best generation) of Islam, came the Khalaf. This group of people finalised the Tafseer, Fiqh, Hadith, Aqeedah and language.

Many of them formulated regarding the divine attributes interpretations (taweel); while declaring that Allah is transcendent beyond any resemblance to all his creation.

A case in point of their statement regarding the word ‘istiwa’; unlike the deviated Salafis who claim Istiwa means sitting (as well as Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibnul Qayyim), they give a possible meaning by stating that it could mean ‘establishing dominion’, ‘perfection’, or ‘completion’. Instead of ‘Allah sitting on the throne’, the verse would read: “The Merciful established himself over the throne.” They did this on the basis of not asserting personification for Allah.

It is a very scary sight to see Salafis imitate the former [extinct] deviant groups such as the Khawarij (in being extreme), the Muatazila (being anthropormorphic) and the Jahmiyyah (corporeality). Deviated sects will also be discussed later.

Specific interpretation (tawil) is a remedy only used in the cases of illness. When there is no need to do tawil, then we do tafweedh (concise the meaning to Allah) and deny the modality and howness.

Imam Bayhaqi cited the quote of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal in his book Manaqib al Imam Ahmad that: “The linguists use the name ‘body’ for something possessing length, width, density, complexity, image and composition. Allah Most Exalted is completely free of all that and nothing was reported in the Divine Law to that effect, so it is false.

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “There is not, in the book of Allah, nor in the Sunnah of his messenger, nor in the words of any of the salaf in the community and its imams, anything to say that Allah is not a body and that his attributes are not bodies and accident. Therefore to negate meanings neither Law nor reason ever negated is ignorance and a misguidance.” – At Tasis 1:101

Imam Dhahabi rejected this position of his teacher and said:

“Exalted is Allah beyond being ascribed a limit or being described other than in the terms He described Himself or taught His Messengers, according to the meaning He wants, without similitude nor modality – {there is nothing whatsoever like him} – (42:11)”

Imam Tahawi said in his summation of the Hanafi doctrine that:

“The throne and the footstool are true; He is in no need of the Throne and that which is beneath it; He encompasses all things and that which is above it, and what He has created is incapable of encompassing him.”

Whereas Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“He is – exalted is He! – above His Heavens, over the throne, separate from the creatures and despite this He is with them wheresoever they are.” And he said in Tasis, “The creator Most High and Exalted is above the world literally, not in the sense of aboveness in rank.”

Similarly, Uthaymeen said in his book Aqidat Ahlus Sunnah – prefaced by Shaykh Abdul Aziz Bin Baaz that: “Whoever has such attributes is with His creatures literally even if He is above them and on his throne literally.”

He also said in one of his fatwas: “In sum, our doctrine {concerning Allah being everywhere} is that Allah is literally with us in his essence and form in the way that befits him, and entails his encompassment of all things with his knowledge, power, hearing, sight, authority and disposal.”

Ibn Taymiyyah further goes to say in his commentary that “the established position received from the predecessors is that of the community and its Imams – is that He is above the throne unceasingly and the throne is never devoid of him, together with his approach and

descent to the nearest heaven without the throne being above him." He even said: "The scholar's approved by Allah and His accepted Friends have narrated that Muhammad the Messenger of Allah will be seated by His Lord on the throne next to him."

Shaykh Abdul Aziz Bin Baaz said in one of his fatwas: "The statement that Allah exists in every place is the greatest kufr." Then he said: "Because Allah is above his throne, above all his creatures."

They confront people who adhere to a madhab regarding the differences of the Imams but they themselves accuse each other of kufr unknowingly. Uthaymeen accepted that Allah is in every place and made it a condition of belief whereas Bin Baaz said its kufr. Salafis can't make their mind up!

Imam Abu Hanifa: "No one should utter concerning Allah, anything of his own. Rather, one should describe him only how he has described himself. One should not say anything about Allah on his own mind. Allah be blessed, the lord of the worlds.

Ibn Khuzayma has compiled a book filled with unspeakable hadith and offensive phrases. He states within his book at-Tawhid: "Anyone who does not believe that Allah is on his throne then he is a disbeliever who must be summoned to repent. Otherwise his head must be cut off and he must be dumped on a garbage heap so that his stench will not disturb Musims and non Muslims.

Imam at-Tahawi said in Bayyan Al-Sunnati wal Jamma: "Exalted is Allah beyond limits (hudud) placed on Him, or having boundaries (ghayat) or having parts (arkan) limbs (ada) or organs (adawat), nor is he contained by the six directions (jihat) as all created things are.

Even Abu Yaala Al-Hanbali (the very same person who claimed Allah has only one direction – beneath) said "Limit is impermissible for Him – Exalted is he! As well as the boundaries, before, after, in front of, behind because these are the attributes which the law never transmitted and they are the attributes tat necessitate place."

Imam Al Subki has stated "Whoever attributes directions to Allah is heedless of the judicative verse that states that there is nothing like him and they also turn a blind eye to tanzih (transcendence) which is the core Muslim belief that stipulates that Allah existed before the universe was fashioned and before its ensuing directions existed – therefore these directions were created simultaneously with the creation of the universe."

Hadhrat Ali was once asked – “Where was Allah before He created the heavens and the earth?” He replied, “Where” is a question about place and Allah existed when there was no place and He is today as he ever was.

Imam Al Qurtubi said in his commentary regarding the verse – [Have you taken security from Him who is in the heaven] (67:16). “What is meant by the above mentioned verse is the reverence and transcendence of Allah beyond the descriptive of lowliness and belowness and the affirmation of His description with loftiness and magnificence – not places nor directions, nor limits, as these are the attributes of our bodies and because He has created places and is in no way in need of them. Rather, he existed before the creation of place and time as there was neither place nor time and he is now as he ever was.”

Al Kamal ibn al-Hummam said:

“The seventh principle is that Allah is not in a specific direction because directions were created simultaneously with the creation of human beings and their like of two legged creatures. For the meaning of ‘above’ is the layer next to one’s head while the rest is below. As for four-legged creatures or those that crawl on their bellies, the meaning of above is the layer next to their backs. Even so, this is a relative matter because if an ant is walking on the ceiling then ‘above’ in relation to it is the direction of the earth because that is the layer next to its back. If every single creature were round, none of these directions would exist. Allah Most High existed from pre-eternity and there was nothing of all creation, therefore He exists without direction.”

{Glorified be thy lord, the lord of the Majesty, from that which they attribute unto him!} – (37:180)

Imam Shafii was asked regarding the divine attributes- he said: “It is forbidden for minds to represent Allah. It is forbidden for the imagination to conceive limits for him. It is forbidden for speculation to presume anything about him. It is indeed forbidden for consciences to deepen reflection about him. It is forbidden for thoughts to grasp other than what he has described himself with as conveyed by the prophet.”

Similarly, Imam Ahmad said “Truly, we concede whatever those hadiths say even if we have no knowledge of their explanations. We don’t discuss them. We don’t dispute about them. We don’t explain them. Rather, we narrate them exactly as they have come to us. We believe in

their words and we know that they are the truth just as the Messenger (PBUH) had said." – This goes to show that he never made a conclusion on them hadith like the salafis rather he passed through them and consigned the meaning for Allah.

There is no place attributed to Allah as he was there before 'location' and place were ever created.

Muhammad ibn Mahbub, Abu Uthman Al-Maghribi's servant, said: 'Uthman said to me one day: "Muhammad! If someone was to have asked you: 'Where is the one you worship?'; what would you say?" I said: 'I would have answered; He is where He never ceased to be' He said: "What about if I asked, where was He in pre-eternity?" I said: 'I would answer: Where he is now." That is: He was when there was no place, and he is now as he ever was. "Abu Uthman was pleased with my answer; he took of his shirt and gave it to me [as a gift]."

Abu Uthman Al-Maghribi said: "I used to believe something of the doctrine of direction for Allah, but when I came to Baghdad this went away from my heart, whereupon I wrote to my companions in Makkah that I had embraced Islam anew." At that time everyone who followed him renounced their belief in direction and place for Allah.

To believe in the divine attributes, we have the following duties:

- To believe in what came from Allah and from his Prophet (PBUH) in the sense that Allah meant and the sense the prophet (PBUH) meant. Belief and confirmation are necessary in order for your Imaan to stay intact. We accept the literal word but the in the regards to the meaning – we relegate this matter to Allah.

- To confirm and admit one's inability to comprehend the Sifaat Khabaariya. It is obligatory upon anyone who has not come to know the true sense to admit incapacity. If one claims knowledge, he will be held accountable for such a claim. As much as any person of knowledge will know that what they know not is more!

- To keep silent - keeping silent is obligatory for the general public. Their enquiring exposes them to something that they can't bear. If they ask an ignoramus about it, the latter will increase the questioner's ignorance; if they ask a person of knowledge, the latter person can't make the person understand, just as an adult cannot make a child understand sexual pleasure or the management of domestic affairs. The only way to make a child understand (husbandry) is through practise. Therefore, if a layperson asks about the likes of this, he must be reprimanded

and deterred. Tell him, “This is not for you – shoo!” Thus did Imam Malik when someone asked him ‘Where is Allah’. He told him that this question is an innovation and said “I think you are nothing but an evil-monger!” as he became drenched in sweat. Similarly, how did Hadhrat Umar treat anyone who dared enquire about the ambiguous verses of the Quran? The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Those before you perished only because they asked too many questions.” We have been ordained to refrain from investigating the fore-ordained Decree of Allah – then what about the Divine Attributes?

- To refrain from paraphrasing the original terms (of these verses and reports).

 - Quranic explanation must not substitute the wordings of an expression with different words nor may they stand in place of one another. For a word can be used metaphorically in a given expression at the exclusion of another, and can have a shared meaning within a certain expression at the exclusion of another. Substitution will cause discourse to become inflated by the cancellation of a metaphor and the assumption that one of the shared meanings is actually meant.

 - A layman may not interpret the Quranic translations in any circumstances.

- To put and end to any mental reflection upon them. – ceasing cogitation regarding the attributes is necessary so that one may not be preoccupied with something that may mount to disbelief and one may become unable to dismiss – nor can anyone else dismiss it from him.

- To hold firmly that whatever is hidden from one’s understanding concerning them is not hidden from Allah and his Prophet (PBUH). Indeed this knowledge is not hidden to Allah and his prophet (PBUH). Hearts are vessels of varying capacity and gems of varying intensity.

Ibn Jahbal Al-Kilabi has written a refutation of all the anthromorphic claims made by the likes of Ibn Taymiyyah called ‘refutation of him who attributes direction to Allah’. An English edition of this book can be found by Shaykh Gibril Fouaad Haddad. He makes it clear that nowhere in the Quran and Sunnah is location, allah sitting on the throne, direction or body parts asserted for Allah in contrary to Ibn Taymiyyah’s claims.

Shaykh Abul Hasan Al-Ashari was from the muatazila before he embraced Islam anew. He was a huge fanatic over their work however one night he saw a dream. He saw the prophet (PBUH) speak to him and say: O Abul Hasan! Hold tight to my Sunnah." He realised this was an indication towards the misguidance of the muatazila whom he followed. The muatazila were obsessed with the beliefs of anthropormorphism- such qualities which we see within the Salafis today. He spent the rest of his life refuting them and their claims and thanks to his work, the muatazila are now extinct.

It is clear that the correct Aqeedah regarding this subject is with the Ashari and Maturidi (founded by Abu Mansur Al-Maturid) Aqeedah which is followed by approximately 90% of the Ummah. Yet Salafis like to call them the innovators.

Salafis like to take metaphorical allegory and figurative statements literally. In some cases, as proven above, it can be detrimental and a threat to one's Imaan. It is important and paramount for a Muslim to hold on to the truth. Abu Dawud has narrated in his Sunan that Hadhrat Muadh said: "Accept the truth from whoever states it, even if he is a disbeliever. And beware of the error of a wise man." They asked him "How will we know that the disbeliever is telling the truth?" He replied –"Truly, light shines over the truth." – He spoke the truth and May Allah be Pleased with Him.

For more evidence buy Al-Qawlul Tamam or visit darultahqiq.com.

Salafis beliefs regarding certain rulings

Some of the views that they have ascribed themselves to and very staunchly advocate as follows:

1) Raful Yadain (raising the hands when going into Ruku and getting up from Ruku). This conforms to the Shafii and Hanbali Madhab. According to the Maaliki and Hanafi madhab, the hands are only raised at the beginning of the Salah. The discussion regarding Raf-ul-yadayn is a very intensive one. There are many Muhadditheen and Mujtahideen that supported each of the opposing views. All four madhabs, however, believe that whatever you do in regards to raful yadain does not invalidate the salah. Some of the scholars (such as Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik) believe it to have been done but later abrogated as suggested by certain hadith that show sahabas not doing it. On the other hand, Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad Bin hambal agree upon particular hadiths in support of this view. They all respect each others opinion. Allah knows best regarding this.
2) Aameen bil Jahr (reciting the ameen out loud). This conforms to the Shafiee and Hanbali Madhab contrary to the Maaliki and Hanafi Madhab. There is difference of opinion regarding this.
3) Jaama bainas-Salaatain (joining Salahs during a journey). This conforms to the Maaliki, Hanbali and Shafii madhab contrary to the Hanafi Madhab.
4) Placing the hands on the ground before the knees when going into sajdah. This conforms to the Maaliki madhab contrary to the Shafii, Hanafi and Hanbali Madhab.
5) The postures of the men's salah is exactly the same as womens's salaah which do not conform to any of the four madhahib. Hence, they have omitted many Ahadith in this regard.
6) Wadhul Yadain Alas-Sadr (placing the hands during Salah upon the chest) which does not conform to any of the four madhahib and goes against hadith also. As the consensus of the Ummah is to

place the hand above the belly button or below the navel – not on the chest like women.

7) Masah upon ordinary socks which does not conform to any of the four madhahib. – a refutation regarding this has been provided by Shaykh Yasir Al-Hanafi of the Hanafi Fiqh YouTube Channel in which he provides evidence as to why this action is not permissible.

8) Performing eight rakaahs of Taraweeh which does not conform to any of the four madhahib. This also goes against the teachings of Hadhrat Umar – whom the prophet (PBUH) told us to follow the teachings of. As well as this, there are certain hadith in favour of 20 rakaats which can be found on the Darul Tahqiq website (articles by Shaykh Abul Hasan).

9) Three talaaqs issued at once is regarded as one talaaq which does not conform to any of the four madhahib or the consensus of the whole muslim ummah including the scholars.

10) They severed themselves from the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jamaah in regard to certain beliefs in Deen e.g. Istiwa alal-Arsh.

11) Salafis believe touching the Quraan without (whudhu) is permissible – this belief has been refuted by many scholars and an explanation regarding this is available on the Hanafi Fiqh Youtube channel.

12) They join their feet in Salaah foot to foot. This is not practised by the other madhahib and is also rebutted by Shaykh Yasir Al-hanafi on the Hanafi fiqh channel.

13) They consider it permissible to look inside the Quran whilst praying Salah – there is difference of opinion regarding this however the consensus of most of the Ummah agree that it invalidates the Salah.

14) They consider fulfilling Qadha Salah to be unnecessary. Despite the prophet (PBUH) stating that a debt to Allah is bigger of that of a debt to people.

15) They don't do two azaans for Jumuah despite it being masnoon and a teaching of Hadhrat Uthman.

16) They believe that if eid and jumuah coincide then the Jumuah salah is not to be read – this is not the teaching of any of the salaf and is rebuked by many maslah books.

17) They object to the fact that in Janazah Salah one should only raise the hands for the first takbeer and not for the remainder.

18) They consider it permissible to read any recitation in place of Surah Fatiha and another Surah.

19) They consider the Dua in Janazah Salah to be read in a loud voice.

20) They consider it 'ok' to pray Janazah Salah inside the masjid without an excuse despite it being makrooh.

21) They consider it masnoon to pray salah bare-headed due to the prophet (PBUH) conducting this act only a few times.

22) They consider it obligatory to recite Quran whilst following the Imam. There is difference of opinion within the Imams regarding this.

23) They consider it bidah to do collective dua after the fardh salah.

24) They consider it permissible for women to attend the masjid and eid gah despite Hadhrat Umar disallowing it.

25) They raise their hands up to their chest and not upto their ears when doing takbeer tahreemah. There is also difference of opinion regarding this.

26) They consider it ‘ok’ for the jumuah khutbah to be read in English. However, it is makrooh-tahreemee (close to haram).

27) They deny the concept of tawassul in dua

28)

29) They disallow women visiting the graveyard – there is difference of opinion regarding this.

30) They differ in the methodology of praying witr.

31) Tashahudd – they use their shahadah finger on their right hand to continuously tap on the knee during this position. This is a contrary view to that of those people who follow a madhab.

32) They classify Salatul Awabin, Salatul-Duha and Salatul Tasbih to be an innovation despite it being a nafl act of worship.

33) They consider Taweez to be shirk despite some sahabas using amulets as a form of ruqya.

34) They consider wiping the face after dua to be an innovation in spite of Hadhrat Umar affirming this action.

35) They have a different opinion regarding the Awrah – their views contradict those of the Imams.

36) They disregard the concepts of Tasawuff, 15th of Shaaban and the prophet PBUH being alive in his grave despite Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah promoting these notions.

Note: Many scholars have indicated the similarities between the Shia and the Salafis.

For example:

- Just like the Shia, the Salafis do not regard the Sahabah to be criteria for right and wrong.

- Just like the Shia, the Salafis also regard three divorces given in a single sitting as one divorce.

- Just like the Shia, the Salafis regard the twenty rakaahs of taraweeh to be an innovation.

- Just like the Shia, the Salafis also regard the Adhaan given in front of the pulpit on the day of Jumuah to be an innovation.

- Just like the Shiah, the Salafis also do not accept the decision of Hadhrat Umar to ban women from the Masaajid. This despite the fact that Hadhrat Aishah said that had the prophet (pbuh) seen the condition of the women after his time, he would certainly have banned them himself.

 Allam Ibn Nujaym of Egypt (d. 970 AH) states, “Whatever ruling opposes those of the four imams, actually oposses consensus (which is not permissible).”

 Allamah Ibn Hummam (d.861 AH) says, “Many latter day scholars have mentioned that only the four Imams should be followed because their Madhahib are well documented.... which is not the case of the others. It is therefore correct to restrict following to only one of these four schools of thought.”

 There are thousands upon thousands of statements from auspicious indiviuals regarding the necessity of following one madhab concerning jurisprudential issues.

These matters require scholarly jurisprudence. There are any hadith supporting this view. The prophet (PBUH) said “Everything has a pillar and the pillar of Deen is Fiqh”. Another Hadith states that ‘a single sitting (lesson) in fiqh is better than sixty years of worship {in reward}.’ As well as this Hadhrat Ali said that the example of the Fuqaaha are like that of hands on the body.

Mufti Afzal Hoosen Elias has compiled an English book called ‘towards understanding taqlid’ which deals with the issues regarding rulings and the concept of taqlid. As well as this Mufti Abdur-Rahman Ibn Yusuf Mangera has published a book called ‘Fiqh-al-Imam’ which deals with these jurusprudential issues also.

Tawassul and Waseelah

Tawassul in Arabic means seeking to draw close. The concept of Tawassul or Waseelah involves using an intermediary as means of Allah accepting your dua or favour. Asking Allah for something (dua) directly without an intermediary is conventional. However, asking through a medium increases the chance of the supplication being accepted and this procedure of Tawassul is affirmed within Quran and Ahadith. This article will hopefully be a means of clarifying the concept of Tawassul/Waseelah In Sha Allah.

The word Tawassul originates from the verbal noun (Waseelah). It is said to literally mean ‘a station with King, a rank or act of devotion’. (This is mentioned in Lisaan ul Arab Volume 11 Page 866 by Ibn Manzur [d.711]) The word itself has been stated in the Quran twice (5:35) and (17:57). It is translated as ‘a means that can be used to gain nearness to God.’ This is the typical meaning of the word.

“O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah and seek means (Waseelah) of nearness to Him and strive hard in his way so that you may be successful.” (5:35 – Quraan)

The above verse emphasises on four things:

- Faith
- Piety (Taqwa)
- Search for means of approach (Waseelah)
- Struggle for Allah’s Sake

The third regulation given after faith and piety is to seek a means. This highlights the importance of this concept as it is presented between two major core beliefs. Also, the verse says that you must have faith and taqwa. Thus Waseelah cannot amount to shirk rather it reaffirms the oneness of Allah. Despite it not being an integral part of religion, it is still necessary to defend the notion and refute those who claim for it to be shirk.

Types of Tawassul:

- Through the names and qualities of Allah.

Allah says in the Quraan: "And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on to Him by them, and leave the company of those who deny His names. They will be requited for what they used to do." [al-Araaf 7:180]

So when a person makes dua, they may invoke Allah through his names such as Ar-Rahman. This is a proven method which has been utilised by many prophets (May Peace and Blessings Be upon Them All) when they made supplication.

Through righteous deeds

- Such as Salah, Fasting, Obedience towards parents, Charity, Dhikr, Recitation of Quraan, Avoiding Haram things and so on. An example of this has been narrated in Saheeh Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim of an incident in which three people were stuck in a cave due to a rock falling and blocking the exit. They asked Allah by the virtue of their good deeds (to save them). Someone may also express their grief as a way of increasing the chance of their dua being accepted. All these methods are proven concepts through Quraan and Ahadith. Nobody disputes this type of Tawassul.

Through the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)

- Tirmidhi relates through his chain of narrators from Uthman ibn Hunayf, that a blind man came to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and said, "I've been afflicted in my eyesight, so pray to Allah for me." The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: "Go make whudhu, perform two rakaahs of prayer and then say:
 'O Allah! I ask You and turn to you through my prophet Muhammad, I seek your intercession with my lord for the return of my eyesight (for my need so that it may be fulfilled)'
 The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) then added: "If there is a need then do the same."

This hadith has been accepted as Saheeh by Imam Ibn Khuzaymah, Imam Hakim and Tirmidhi. The words ‘I turn to you through your prophet’ clearly initiate Tawassul and the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) instructs us to do the same. (Al-Raddul Muhkamul mateen Page 145)

The scholars of Sacred Law have inferred from this hadith that doing tawassul through the prophet is permissible. However, Salafis like to disregard this Hadith with excuses such as saying that doing Tawassul is no longer valid as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) passed away. The ruling regarding this blatant claim is that Tawassul would be more effective now as the status of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) increases more and more towards the Day of Judgement due to the continuous practise of his teachings taking place daily by his followers. The more people act upon his teachings, the more reward he attains thus increasing his status. As well as this, the belief of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah is that the prophet is alive in his grave as proven by the mutawatir Ahadith as well as the consensus of the Salaf (pious predeccesors).

Moreover, Tabarani in his ‘al-Mu’jam al saghir’ reports a hadith from Uthman ibn Hunayf that a man repeatedly visited Hadhrat Uthman (Allah be pleased with him) concerning something that he needed, but Uthman paid no attention to him or his need. The man met Ibn Hunaf and later complained to him about the matter – this being after the wisal (passing away) of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and after the Caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar – so Uthman Ibn Hunayf (who was one of the Companions who collected Ahadith and learned in religion) said: “Go to the place of ablution and perform whudhu, then come to the masjid and perform two rakaahs and prayer therein and say:

‘O Allah! I ask you and turn to you through our Prophet Muhammad, I turn through you to my lord that you may fulfil my need.’ And mention your need. Then come so that I can go with you to Hadhrat Uthman.” So the man left and did as he was told, then went to the door of Uthman ibn Affan (Allah be pleased with him) and the doorman came and took him by the hand to Uthman ibn Affan and seated to him on a cushion. Uthman asked – “What do you need?” and the man mentioned what he wanted so Uthman accomplished that for him. Then he said – ‘I forgot

you needed that until now; whenever you need something, just mention it. Then, the man departed and met Uthman Ibn Hunayf and said to him “May Allah reward you! He didn’t come to see my need until you spoke with him”. Uthman Ibn Hunayf replied – ‘By Allah! I did not speak to him, but I have seen a blind man coming to the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and complain about his eyesight. The prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said to him – “Can you not bear it?”. The man replied, ‘O messenger! I do not have anyone to lead me around and it is a great hardship upon me.’ The prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) told him, ‘Go make ablution and pray two rakaahs and make the dua.’ Ibn Hunayf went on, “By Allah, we didn’t part company or speak long before the man returned to us as if nothing had ever been wrong with him.”

This is an explicit, unequivocal text from a prophetic companion proving the legal validity of tawassul through the righteous even if they may be dead. The account has been classified as saheeh (authentic) by many scholars who have rigorously authenticated it such as Baihaqi, Mundhiri and Haythami and Ibn Taymiyyah.

Another example to prove this idea is the incident related by Imam Bukhari and others. (Sahih Bukhari Page 245 Hadith Number 1010) The companion Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) made Tawassul through the Uncle of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace), Sayyiduna Abbas in asking Allah for rain at the time of drought. In this text, the word used in describing the tawassul is a continuous past tense verb which proves that making tawassul through the prophet after his wisal was done by the Sahaba. The same should apply to us. The hadith has been affirmed by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hibaan, Imam Tabrani and Imam Baihaqi. Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani also accepts the tawassul in this hadith in his book (Fathul Bari – Page 557).

Imam Hakim has mentioned in his mustadrak that Hadhrat Umar addressed the people – “O people, verily the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) would hold Hadhrat Abbas in a very high esteem as a son would his father, so follow the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) in his relationship towards his uncle and make him a means to Allah in whatever befalls you.’ (Volume 3 Page 334)

Sayydiuna Anas ibn Malik narrates that the Hadhrat Fatima passed away and Hadhrat Ali made the following dua before burying her: “O Allah, The One who gives life and death and Who is living and will never die, forgive my mother Fatima and make her arguements known to her (make the questions in the grave easy to answer). Make her grave spacious for her. I ask you through the right of your prophet and all the prophets before me, for verily you are the most merciful.’ (al- Mujamaul awsat Volume 1 Page 152; Hilya Volume 3 Page 121) It is classed as Saheeh by Ibn Hibaan and Hakim (raful manarah page 147). Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Haythami classed it as hasan (fair).

Sayyiduna Malik Al-Dar (the treasurer of food) during the time of Sayyiduna Umar ibn Khattab narrates that once there was a drought so a man went to the grave of the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and said:

‘O Rasulullah! Ask for rain on behalf of your Ummah, for verily, they are being destroyed.’ Thereafter this person was instructed in a dream to go to Sayyiduna Umar and tell gim that ‘the rain will soon come and say to him – “Be intelligent”.’ When Umar was informed regarding this he began to cry and said ‘O my lord, I will only leave out what I am unable to do.’ Musanaf Ibn Abi Shaybah Volume 12 Page 31-32 Dalaailun Nubbuwah by Imam Baihaqi Volume 7 Page 47) Ibn Katheer has said its sanad is strong in Musnadal Farooq Volume 1 Page 223. Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani has also affirmed its authenticity in Fathul Bari.

Imam Hakim and others have narrated on the account of Hadhrat Umar that the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, ‘When Adam ate from the tree he said, ‘O My lord, I ask you through the right of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) that you forgive me.’ Allah then accepted his repentance. Al Mustadarak Volume 2 Page 615, Dalailun Nubuwah of Imam Bayhaqi Volume 5 page 489 and al Mujamus Saghir of Imam Tabrani Volume 2 Page 82.

This Hadith has been strongly authenticated by many scholars and this proves tawassul. The Waseelah was done before the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was born so why can’t we do it after he passes away.

As it is reported by Amr ibn Shuayb by Imam Nasai in his Sunan 6:262 that his grandfather had said: “Through the means of the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), we seek help for our women and children from believers.” – the narrator has said that they repeated these words as instructed by the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace).

It is worthy to note that even the Jews made tawassul of the prophet to come (Prophet Muhammad - Allah bless him and give him peace) in order to defeat their enemy during war. This is mentioned in the Quraan in Surah Baqarah Verse 89. This is discussed in tafseer al-jalalain.

Allamah Alusi has said in the tafseer of this verse in Ruhul-Ma’ani that “This Ayah was revealed regarding Banu Quraizah and Banu Nazeer, who used to ask Allah for victory against Aus and Khazraj by means of the prophet(Allah bless him and give him peace) and this was done before he came to this earth. They used to say ‘Oh Allah, we beseech you by the rights of that Prophet of yours whom you have promised to send us towards the end of time, that you give us victory over our enemies today.’ This has been narrated also by Tafseer-e-kashaf and khazin.”

This incident is also mentioned in Tafsir Uthmani, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Fathul Qadeer Shawkani. Ibn Qayum al Jawzi.

How is it possible for salafis to classify this notion as Shirk despite it being carried out by a Sahabi. As well as this, nobody from the Salaf disagreed with the concept. Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah even retracted his statements regarding Tawassul being Shirk [He accepted it to be valid] after a debate with the great Maliki scholar Ibn Ata Allah sl-Iskandari. This confrontation allowed him to understand the truth and reality regarding this concept. Those people who still claim it to be monotheism after substantial proof are purely ignorant. (see Musnad.com for the dialogue and references).

<u>Through a pious and righteous individual</u>

Every person with a sound mind will determine that there is no reason to differentiate between the living and the dead. This is the reason why scholars from the Salaf (who the salafis claim to follow) such as Imam Subki, Hafidh Ibn Kathir, Imam an-Nawawi (Allah have mercy

upon them all) and many others have declared the permissibility of tawassul through the righteous, whether they are alive or passed away due to the mercy of Allah.

As proven above, Tawassul through the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is valid due to the substantial proofs provided. The salaf also agreed that tawassul of righteous individuals was also permitted as proven below. The very same people who claim to follow the salaf inadvertently claim they have commited shirk. The reason for this is because they believe that Tawassul of this kind is shirk so how do they explain the actions of the pious and righteous predecessors?

- Imam Hasan ibn Ibrahim al Hallal has stated that whenever he had an urgent issue, he would go and visit the grave of Imam Moosa ibn Jafar and make Tawassul through him. Allah would then fulfil his need. (Taarikh Baghdad)
- Imam Shafiee would make Tawassul at the grave of Imam Abu Hanifa. (Taarikh Baghdad – 1:123). Allamah al-Kawthari has classified this incident as saheeh. (maqaalatul kawthari Page 381). Imam Shafi states: 'I derive blessings from the person of Imam Abu Hanifah and I visit his grave everyday. When I face a problem, I offer two optional cycles oof prayed and visit his grave and I pray to Allah to solve my problem. And I have not even left the place that my problem is solved. (Ibn Abidin SHami in Raddul muhtar (1:41)
- Allamah Tajudeen Al-Subki has mentioned that the people would go to the grave of Imam Ibn Farook (the teacher of Imam Baihaqi) and make tawassul through him in a dua. His dua would later be accepted.
 He has also written in Al-Shifa As Siqam (page 377) that it is permissible to take tawassul of all righteous people, infact no muslm ever rejected this apart from those who were from the innovators of religion.
- Imam Dhahabi narrates in As Siyar Al-Alam an Nabula Volume 12 Page 469 that once there was a drought in Samarqand. The people tried their best and prayed Salatul Istisqa but it did not rain. The Qadhi suggested that everyone does tawassul of Imam

Bukhari (whose grave was in Khartank – a nearby town). The people started to make Waseelah and immediately Allah sent rainclouds.

- Hafiz al-Zarkashi has made tawassul in the introduction to his commentary on Sahih Al-Bukhari entitled ‘Al-Tanqeeh’.
- Hafiz Taqi ud deen Al-Subki (the father of Tajudeen al-Subki) has approved this form of Tawassul and he has written a detailed treatise on this topic. (see Shifa-u-Siqaam pages 293-318)
- Allamah Nawawi has mentioned that from among the etiquettes of visiting the grave of Rasulullah (Allah bless him and give him peace) is that one should make Tawassul. Thereafter, he states that ‘....and one of the best thing that one should do is what had been related by Allamah Al-Mardawi and Al-Qadhi Abu Teeb and all our Ulema and they have regarded it as commendable, and that is the incident of Imam al-Utabi that he said, ‘I was once seated by the grave of Rasulullah (Allah bless him and give him peace) when a Bedouin came and said, ‘Peace be upon you O messenger, I have heard Almighty Allah say in the Quraan “And if they, when they had been unjust to themselves, had come to you (the prophet) and begged Allah’s forgiveness and the messenger had begged forgiveness for them, indeed they would have found Allah All-forgiving. Most Merciful. (Surah Nisa Verse 64). Hence, I have come to you in a state of asking forgiveness by seeking your intervention by my Lord.’ Thereafter, he recited a few couplets and departed. Imam al Utabi states, ‘I then fell asleep and I saw Rasullulah (Allah bless him and give him peace) instructing me by these words, ‘O Utabi, go to that Bedouin and give him the glad tidings that Allah has forgiven him.’ (Refer to Al Majmoo Volume 8 Page 456 and Manaasikul Imam Al-Nawawi Page 498-499. This incident had been related by scholars such as Hafiz Ibn Katheer in his tafseer and Allamah Ibn Qudamah in his Al-Mughni Volume 3 Page 556 and Imam Abul-Faraj in his Al-Sharhul Kabeer Volume 3 Page 495 etc.)
- Imam Dhahabi, Ibn Majah, Imam Nasai and Imam Ghazali and a countless number of scholars have affirmed the concept of Tawassul in their respected overviews of the hadiths regarding Waseelah.

- Imam Malik once was asked by the caliph on the best method of making dua. Imam Malik replied: “O caliph, why do you turn your face from the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) as he is the source of mediation for you and for your ancestor Adam on the day of judgement. Rather turn towards him and seek his intercession so that he intercedes for you on the day of judgement.” – (Qadi Iyad in Shifa 2:596 with a sound chain of transmission).
- Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah accepts Tawassul when discussing an incident of Abdul Malik and his stomach ulcer in. In this incident, he made Waseelah of the prophet after his passing. (Qaida Al-Jaleela Page 91).
- Imam Qurtubi narrates that Hadhrat Ali came to the grave of Rasulullah (Allah bless him and give him peace) three days after he passed away. He said ‘Ya Rasulullah (Allah bless him and give him peace), you spoke and we heard. We learnt from you. I am a sinner so ask for me.’ – A voice came saying you are forgiven. This incident highlights tawassul and the effect it had. (Tafseer Qurtubi)
- Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal has also encouraged making Tawassul in ones duas. (Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya Volume 1 Page 140 and Mafaaheem Page 137).
 Al Mardawi said: “The correct position of the (Hanbali) Madhab is that it is permissible in one’s dua to use as ones means a pious person (saalih), and it is said that this is desirable and recommended (mustahab). Imam Ahmad said to Abu Bakr al-Marzawi: ‘Let him use the Prophet as a means in his supplication to Allah.’ (Al-Insaf 2:456) This is also cited by Ibn Taymiyyah in hid Majmu-Al-Fatawa Volume 1 Page 140.
- Hafiz Shamsudeen Al-Sakhawi (the grand student of Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani made Tawassul many times through Rasulullah (Allah bless him and give him peace) in his books. (see Tuhfatul Lateefah Volume 1 Page 3 and 17)
- Albani (a salafi scholar) even admits in his book Al-Tawwasul [38] that the Imams (such as Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and Imam Shawkani) have permitted Tawassul. Despite accepting this claim, nevertheless he still promotes the fact that this notion is Shirk.

Indirectly, he may be accusing these great scholars of commiting Shirk.

- Imam Shawkani Al-Salafi (a ghair muqalid scholar referred to by many salafis) has also permitted Tawassul. (Tuhfatul Zakireen Page 50) He has written in Tuhfatul Zakireen:
 "And in this hadith is proof for the permissibility of Tawassul through the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) to Allah. With the conviction that the actual doer is Allah and that he is the Giver and Withholder. What he wills, is – and what he doesn't will, will never be."
- Imam Nawawi states that one should face the grave of Rasulullah (Allah bless him and give him peace) and make him an intermediary and intercede through him to Allah. (Majmu Sharh Al-Madhab – Kitaab al Hajj.
- Ibn Hajar (Tahdhib 7:339) narrates the account of Imam of Ahlul_hadith Ibn Khuzaymah, under the entry of Ali bin Musa al-Ridha. He relates that Ibn Khuzayma also performed tawassul at the grave of Al-Ridha.
- In his Rijal book Al-Thuqat (8:456) under the entry of Ali bin Musa al Ridha, Ibn Hibaan relates his own account of going to Al-ridhas grave, performing tawassul through him and states that "Whenever I was afflicted with a problem during my stay in Tus, I would visit Ali bin Musa's grave and ask Allah to relieve me of that problem and it (my dua) would be answered and the problem alleviated. And this is something I did, and found to work, many times...."

The list of Ulama continues (see Maqalatul Kawthari Page 378-397). All of these esteemed scholars practised Tawassul and permitted it. After contemplating all the evidences provided, anyone with a sound mind would not deny the permissibility of Tawassul. Abu Abdullah Al-Timisani Al-Maliki has written a book concerning how Tawassul has remained the practise of the entire Ummah since its existence. (See Maqalatul Kawthari Page 397).

Anyone doing Tawassul is merely using a honourable personality in order to ask Allah (only) to fulfil his need without thinking the individual is being supplicated to or that he will fulfil his need. Allah is the sole helper and provider. Nobody denies the fact that Allah is the only one that can

give aid and help. All good comes from Him and He is powerful over everyone and everything. Tawassul is merely a method of using an intermediary to make the supplication be at a higher chance of getting accepted. In no way, shape or form does it entail shirk. However, if one asks directly from the deceased and believes that the Anbiya (Allah bless them and give them peace) possess the power to provide then this would be Shirk because he is now ascribing partners to Allah in the quality of providing. The analogy is given that Allah provides cure from health, but using penicillin is the intermediary in order to get that cure from Allah. Indeed there is no cure but from Allah. The same analogy applies with Tawassul – the aid comes from Allah and the intermediary used in the dua can be a pious and righteous individual.

Asking from the deceased is totally prohibited. However asking Allah through the medium of a honourable personality is permitted and people need to understand this delicate issue as it is the practise of the Sahabas and the pious predecessors. Furthermore, all four schools of thought within fiqh allow and permit Tawassul through the deceased pious individuals as well as the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thanwi has written in Imdad al-Fatawa (4:372) that – “Indeed Tawassul through those accepted by Allah in dua, whether they are alive or dead is permissible. The tawassul of Umar through Abbas in seeking rain has been established as so has the tawassul through the messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) and the blind man after the death of the prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). Therefore there is no doubt regarding the permissibility. Yes, when extremism in this matter becomes apparent in the laity of the people, and they were prohibited for that reason, the prohibition in this case is also correct.”

<u>Summary of points</u>

1. It is permissible to make Tawassul through the Ambiya, the pious, Sideeqeen, martyrs and mutaqeen. It is permissible to make dua through them as a Waseelah. (Raad al Muhtaar Volume 5 Page 350, Ruhul Ma’ani Volume 6 Page 128).
2. Tawassul is permitted whilst the pious are alive as well as after they pass away. (Fathul Bari Volume 1 Page 151, Bariqah

Mahmudiyyah Volume 1 Page 270, Tusheen as Sudoor Page 435, Al-Muhammad Alal Mufannad Page 12 and 13)

3. The method of Tawassul is that a person should make dua – 'O Allah, I wish acceptance of my dua through the Waseelah of a particular pious individual and I desire that my need shall be fulfilled.' Or in the words similar to these as mentioned in Bukhari Volume 1 Page 137, Tirmidhi Volume 2 Page 197 and in Hujjatullahi al Baaligha Volume 2 Page 6.
4. Instead of Waseelah, if a person directly asks a righteous person to fulfil his needs or to remove his difficulties, then this is Shirk. (Mishkaat Volume 2 Page 453, Majma Bishar Al-Anwaar and Hujjatullahi al-Baaligha Volume 1 Page 122.
5. It is permissible to make Waseelah through the being and qualities of Allah, through good deeds like Salaah, fasting, obedience to one's parents and so on. This is mentioned in Bukhari Volume 2 Page 883, Muslim Volume 2 Page 553, Sharah Nawawi on Muslim Volume 2 Page 353, Fatawa Ibn Taymiyyah Volume 27 Page 133.
6. It is recommended to make Waseelah through the names and attributes of Allah as done by the prophets and as stated in the Quran.
7. Just as it is permissible to make Waseelah through good deeds, similarly, it is permissible to do the same through the pious and chosen servants of Allah. THIS IS BECAUSE WASEELAH THROUGH A PERSON IS WASEELAH THROUGH DEEDS IN REALITY. This is mentioned in Shifa us Siqaam Page 129 from Tasheen us Sudoor Page 405, See Ziyaartul Qubbor Page 118, Anfaas e Isa Page 41.
8. Making Waseelah through the pious people is actually because of the love you have for them in the heart. So if Waseelah can be done through an action which is carried out by the apparent parts of the body, then why can't it be done using an action which is done by the heart and that is the love of the saaliheen.

A list of Deviated sects

Mujassimah or **Mushabbihah**: Those who declare that Allah is like his creation and that the attributes of Allah are like the attributes of the

creation. This was first propagated by Maqaatil ibn Sulayman al-Khuraasanee, during the era of the taabieen.

Jahmiyyah: The followers of Jahm ibn Safwaan, the student of al-Ja'd ibn Dirham, both of whom were executed for their apostasy in the time of the lesser tabieen. Among their beliefs is that they deny the attributes of Allah and declare that the Quran is created.

Naasibee: One who has hatred towards the family of the prophet and Hadhrat Ali.

Rafidis: They are also known as the ithna ashariyya (twelve shias) or Ja'faris. They are considered disbelievers by the consensus of the Ummah. This sect was founded by Abdullah ibn Saba, a Jew, who appeared at the time of the khilafah of Uthman. He claimed love for Hadhrat Ali and the Ahlul-Bayt. They berate and curse the Sahaabas as well as considering them to be disbelievers, in particular Hadhrat Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and the wives of the prophet (PBUH). They also believe the Quraan to be incomplete.

Khawaarij: Those individuals who rebelled against Hadhrat Ali, declaring him to be a disbeliever and those who rebel against and fight against the Muslim rulers. The prophet (PBUH) said that the Quraan does not pass through their throats [reach their hearts] are that they are the dogs of the hellfire. They hold Muslims who have commited major sins to be disbelievers. Many people believe Salafis to be another uprising of the Khawarij sect – which is currently extinct

Mu'tazila: This sect began at the start of the second century after the Hijrah. It was founded by Amr Ibn Ubayd and Waasil ibn Ataa. This sect believes in the negation of Allah's attributes, calling it Tawheed! They believe the Quraan to be created, rebellion against the Muslim rulers to be correct and that the Muslims, guilty of major sins, are in a position between belief and disbelief and they are destined to be in the hellfire forever.

Hashwiyya: Another name for the followers of the Salafi sect who adhere to the beliefs of anthropomorphism by following the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah in this regard.

Jabariyya (or **Mujbirah**): The Jabariyya hold that people have no free-will and are not responsible for their own actions, rather they are forced.

Qadariyya: They are also the followers of Jahm Ibn Safwaan. This sect was founded by Maabad al Juhanee in Basrah at the end of the era of the companions. They deny Allah's pre-decree (qadr) and believe that man created his own action which are outside the Will and Power of Allah.

Murji’ah: They uphold the belief of Irjaa (to hold that sins, major or minor, do not affect faith and that Imaan neither increases nor decreases.) The first to call to this belief was Gheelan ibn Abee Gheelan, the Qadariyy. He was executed in 105H. They claim that actions are not part of faith, that people do not vary in Faith, that faith does not increase and decrease and that one should declare himself a believer without saying ‘If Allah wills.’The Murjiah are divided into three groups, as Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah have mentioned.

a) Those who claim that Faith is a condition of the heart only.
b) Those who claim that Faith is merely verbal affirmation (i.e. the Karamiyya)
c) Those who claim that Faith is only affirmation with the heart and tongue, but that action is necessary in addition to it.

The correct Aqeedah (belief)

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

Now that we have established the deviated Salafi beliefs, it is time that we now focus on the true Aqeedah of the Muslims.

The great scholar Hujjat al-lslam Abu Ja'far al-Warraq al-Tahawi al-Misri, may Allah have mercy on him, said: This is a presentation of the beliefs of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama`a, according to the school of the jurists of this religion, may Allah be pleased with them all, and what they believe regarding the fundamentals of the religion and their faith in the Lord of the worlds.

We say about Allah's unity, believing by Allah's help that:

1. Allah is One, without any partners.

2. There is nothing like Him.

3. There is nothing that can overwhelm Him.

4. There is no god other than Him.

5. He is the Eternal without a beginning and enduring without end.

6. He will never perish or come to an end.

7. Nothing happens except what He wills.

8. No imagination can conceive of Him and no understanding can comprehend Him.

9. He is different from any created being.

10. He is living and never dies and is eternally active and never sleeps.

11. He creates without His being in need to do so and provides for His creation without any effort.

12. He causes death with no fear and restores to life without difficulty.

13. He has always existed together with His attributes since before creation. Bringing creation into existence did not add anything to His attributes that was not already there. As He was, together with His attributes, in pre-eternity, so He will remain throughout endless time.

14. It was not only after the act of creation that He could be described as "the Creator" nor was it only by the act of origination that He could he described as "the Originator."

15. He was always the Lord even when there was nothing to be Lord of, and always the Creator even when there was no creation.

16. In the same way that He is the "Bringer to life of the dead," after He has brought them to life a first time, and deserves this name before bringing them to life, so too He deserves the name of "Creator" before He has created them.

17. This is because He has the power to do everything, everything is dependent on Him, everything is easy for Him, and He does not need anything. "There is nothing like Him and He is the Hearer, the Seer." (al-Shura 42:11)

18. He created creation with His knowledge.

19. He appointed destinies for those He created.

20. He allotted to them fixed life spans.

21. Nothing about them was hidden from Him before He created them, and He knew everything that they would do before He created them.

22. He ordered them to obey Him and forbade them to disobey Him.

23. Everything happens according to His degree and will, and His will is accomplished. The only will that people have is what He wills for them. What He wills for them occurs and what He does not will, does not occur.

24. He gives guidance to whomever He wills, and protects them, and keeps them safe from harm, out of His generosity; and He leads astray whomever He wills, and abases them, and afflicts them, out of His justice.

25. All of them are subject to His will either through His generosity or His justice.

26. He is Exalted beyond having opposites or equals.

27. No one can ward off His decree or delay His command or overpower His affairs.

28. We believe in all of this and are certain that everything comes from Him.

29. And we are certain that Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is His chosen Servant and elect Prophet and His Messenger with whom He is well pleased,

30. And that he is the Seal of the Prophets and the Imam of the godfearing and the most honored of all the messengers and the Beloved of the Lord of all the worlds.

31. Every claim to Prophet-hood after Him is falsehood and deceit.

32. He is the one who has been sent to all the jinn and all mankind with truth and guidance and with light and illumination.

33. The Qur'an is the word of Allah. It came from Him as speech without it being possible to say how. He sent it down on His Messenger as revelation. The believers accept it, as absolute truth. They are certain that it is, in truth, the word of Allah. It is not created as is the speech of human beings, and anyone who hears it and claims that it is human speech has become an unbeliever. Allah warns him and censures him

and threatens him with Fire when He says, Exalted is He: "I will burn him in the Fire." (al-Muddaththir 74:26) When Allah threatens with the Fire those who say "This is just human speech" (74:25) we know for certain that it is the speech of the Creator of mankind and that it is totally unlike the speech of mankind.

34. Anyone who describes Allah as being in any way the same as a human being has become an unbeliever. All those who grasp this will take heed and refrain from saying things such as the unbelievers say, and they will know that He, in His attributes, is not like human beings.

35. The Seeing of Allah by the People of the Garden is true, without their vision being all-encompassing and without the manner of their vision being known. As the Book of our Lord has expressed it: "Faces on that Day radiant, looking at their Lord." (al-Qiyama 75:22-3) The explanation of this is as Allah knows and wills. Everything that has come down to us about this from the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in authentic traditions, is as he said and means what he intended. We do not delve into that, trying to interpret it according to our own opinions or letting our imaginations have free rein.

No one is safe in his religion unless he surrenders himself completely to Allah, the Exalted and Glorified and to His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and leaves the knowledge of things that are ambiguous to the one who knows them.

36. A man's Islam is not secure unless it is based on submission and surrender. Anyone who desires to know things which it is beyond his capacity to know, and whose intellect is not content with surrender, will find that his desire veils him from a pure understanding of Allah's true unity, clear knowledge and correct belief, and that he veers between disbelief and belief, confirmation and denial and acceptance and rejection. He will be subject to whisperings and find himself confused and full of doubt, being neither an accepting believer nor a denying rejecter.

37. Belief of a man in the seeing of Allah by the People of the Garden is not correct if he imagines what it is like or interprets it according to his own understanding, since the interpretation of this seeing or indeed, the meaning of any of the subtle phenomena which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its interpretation and strictly adhering to the submission.

This is the religion of Muslims. Anyone who does not guard himself against negating the attributes of Allah, or likening Allah to something else, has gone astray and has failed to understand Allah's glory,

because our Lord, the Glorified and the Exalted, can only possibly be described in terms of oneness and absolute singularity and no creation is in any way like Him.

38. He is beyond having limits placed on Him, or being restricted, or having parts or limbs. Nor is He contained by the six directions as all created things are.

39. Al-Mi`raj (the Ascent through the heavens) is true. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was taken by night and ascended in his bodily form, while awake, through the heavens, to whatever heights Allah willed for him. Allah ennobled him in the way that He ennobled him and revealed to him what He revealed to him, "and his heart was not mistaken about what it saw" (al-Najm 53:11). Allah blessed him and granted him peace in this world and the next.

40. Al-Hawd, the Pool which Allah has granted the Prophet as an honour to quench the thirst of his Community on the Day of Judgement, is true.

. Al-Shafa`a, the intercession which is stored up for Muslims, is true, as related in the hadiths.

42. The covenant which Allah made with Adam and his offspring is true.

43. Allah knew, before the existence of time, the exact number of those who would enter the Garden and the exact number of those who would enter the Fire. This number will neither be increased nor decreased.

44. The same applies to all actions done by people, which are done exactly as Allah knew they would be done. Everyone is eased towards what he was created for and it is the action with which a man's life is sealed which dictates his fate. Those who are fortunate are fortunate by the decree of Allah, and those who are wretched are wretched by the decree of Allah.

45. The exact nature of the decree is Allah's secret in His creation, and no angel near the Throne, nor Prophet sent with a message, has been given knowledge of it. Delving into it and reflecting too much about it only leads to destruction and loss, and results in rebelliousness. So be extremely careful about thinking and reflecting on this matter or letting doubts about it assail you, because Allah has kept knowledge of the decree away from human beings, and forbidden them to enquire about it, saying in His Book, "He is not asked about what He does, but they are asked" (al-Anbiya' 21: 23).

Therefore, anyone who asks: "Why did Allah do that?" has gone against a judgement of the Book, and anyone who goes against a judgement of the Book is an unbeliever.

46. This in sum is what those of Allah's Friends with enlightened hearts need to know and constitutes the degree of those firmly endowed with knowledge. For there are two kinds of knowledge: knowledge which is accessible to created beings, and knowledge which is not accessible to created beings. Denying the knowledge which is accessible is disbelief, and claiming the knowledge which is inaccessible is disbelief. Belief can only be firm when accessible knowledge is accepted and the inaccessible is not sought after.

47. We believe in the lawh (the tablet) and al-Qalm (the pen) and in everything written on the former. Even if all created beings were to gather together to make something fail to exist, whose existence Allah had written on the Tablet, they would not be able to do so. And if all created beings were to gather together to make something exist which Allah had not written on it, they would not be able to do so. The pen has dried having written down all that will be in existence until the Day of Judgement. Whatever a person has missed he would have never got, and whatever he would have got he would have never missed.

48. It is necessary for the servant to know that Allah already knows everything that is going to happen in His creation and has decreed it in a detailed and decisive way. There is nothing that He has created in either the heavens or the earth that can contradict it, or add to it, or erase it, or change it, or decrease it, or increase it in any way. This is a fundamental aspect of belief and a necessary element of all knowledge and recognition of Allah's oneness and Lordship. As Allah says in His Book: "He created everything and decreed it in a detailed way." (al-Furqan 25: 2) And He also says: "Allah's command is always a decided decree." (al-Ahzab 33: 38) So woe to anyone who argues with Allah concerning the decree and who, with a sick heart, starts delving into this matter. In his deluded attempt to investigate the Unseen, he is seeking a secret that can never be uncovered, and he ends up an evil-doer, telling nothing but lies.

49. Al-`Arsh (the Throne) and al-Kursi (the Chair) are true.

50. He is independent of the Throne and that which is beneath it.

51. He encompasses all things and that which is above it, and what He has created is incapable of encompassing Him.

52. We say with belief, acceptance and submission that Allah took Ibrahim as an intimate friend and that He spoke directly to Musa.

53. We believe in the angels, and the Prophets, and the books which were revealed to the messengers, and we bear witness that they were all following the manifest Truth.

54. We call the people of our qibla Muslims and believers as long as they acknowledge what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought, and accept as true everything that he said and told us about.

55. We do not enter into vain talk about Allah nor do we allow any dispute about the religion of Allah.

56. We do not argue about the Qur'an and we bear witness that it is the speech of the Lord of all the Worlds which the Trustworthy Spirit came down with and taught the most honoured of all the Messengers, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is the speech of Allah and no speech of any created being is comparable to it. We do not say that it was created and we do not go against the Congregation (jama`a) of the Muslims regarding it.

57. We do not consider any of the people of our qibla to be unbelievers because of any wrong action they have done, as long as they do not consider that action to have been lawful.

58. Nor do we say that the wrong action of a man who has belief does not have a harmful effect on him.

59. We hope that Allah will pardon the people of right action among the believers and grant them entrance into the Garden through His mercy, but we cannot be certain of this, and we cannot bear witness that it will definitely happen and that they will be in the Garden. We ask forgiveness for the people of wrong action among the believers and, although we are afraid for them, we are not in despair about them.

60. Certainty and despair both remove one from the religion, but the path of truth for the People of the Qibla lies between the two.

61. A person does not step out or belief except by disavowing what brought him into it.

62. Belief consists of affirmation by the tongue and acceptance by the heart..

63. And the whole of what is proven from the Prophet, upon him be peace, regarding the Shari`a and the explanation (of the Qur'an and of Islam) is true.

64. Belief is, at base, the same for everyone, but the superiority of some over others in it is due to their fear and awareness of Allah, their opposition to their desires, and their choosing what is more pleasing to Allah.

65. All the believers are Friends of Allah and the noblest of them in the sight of Allah are those who are the most obedient and who most closely follow the Qur'an.

66. Belief consists of belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and belief that the Decree -- both the good of it and the evil of it, the sweet of it and the bitter or it -- is all from Allah.

67. We believe in all these things. We do not make any distinction between any of the messengers, we accept as true what all of them brought.

68. Those of the Community of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who have committed grave sins will be in the Fire, but not forever, provided they die and meet Allah as believers affirming His unity even if they have not repented. They are subject to His will and judgement.

If He wants, He will forgive them and pardon them out of His generosity, as is mentioned in the Qur'an when He says: "And He forgives anything less than that (shirk) to whomever He wills" (al-Nisa' 4: 116); if He wants, He will punish them in the Fire out of His justice, and then bring them out of the Fire through His mercy, and for the intercession of those who were obedient to Him, and send them to the Garden.

This is because Allah is the Protector of those who recognize Him and will not treat them in the hereafter in the same way as He treats those who deny Him, who are bereft of His guidance and have failed to obtain His protection. O Allah, You are the Protector of Islam and its people; make us firm in Islam until the day we meet You.

69. We agree with doing the prayer behind any of the People of the Qibla whether rightful or wrongful, and doing the funeral prayer over any of them when they die.

70. We do not say that any of them will categorically go to either the Garden or the Fire, and we do not accuse any of them of kufr (disbelief), shirk(associating partners with Allah), or nifaq (hypocrisy), as long as they have not openly demonstrated any of those things. We leave their secrets to Allah.

71. We do not agree with killing any of the Community of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, unless it is obligatory by Shari`a to do so.

72. We do not accept rebellion against our Imam or those in charge of our affairs even if they are unjust, nor do we wish evil on them, nor do we withdraw from following them. We hold that obedience to them is part of obedience to Allah, the Glorified, and therefore obligatory as long as they do not order to commit sins. We pray for their right guidance and ask for pardon for their wrongs.

73. We follow the Sunna of the Prophet and the Congregation of the Muslims, and avoid deviation, differences and divisions. ‹

74. We love the people of justice and trustworthiness, and hate the people of injustice and treachery.

75. When our knowledge about something is unclear, we say: "Allah knows best."

76. We agree with wiping over leather socks (in ablution) whether on a journey or otherwise, just as has come in the hadiths.

77. Hajj and jihad under the leadership of those in charge of the Muslims, whether they are right or wrong-acting, are continuing obligations until the Last Hour comes. Nothing can annul or controvert them.

78. We believe in the the noble angels who write down our actions, for Allah has appointed them over us as two guardians.

79. We believe in the Angel of Death who is in charge of taking the spirits of all the worlds.

80. We believe in the punishment in the grave for those who deserve it, and in the questioning in the grave by Munkar and Nakir about one's Lord, one's religion and one's prophet, as has come down in the hadiths from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and in reports from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

81. The grave is either one of the meadows of the Garden or one of the pits of the Fire.

82. We believe in being brought back to life after death and in being recompensed for our actions on the Day of Judgement, and the exhibition of works, and the reckoning, and the reading of the book, and the reward or punishments, and the Bridge, and the Balance; and the deeds of the Muslims, good evil obedient and disobedient are weighed by it.

83. The Garden and the Fire are created things that never come to an end and we believe that Allah created them before the rest of creation

and then created people to inhabit each of them. Whoever He wills goes to the Garden out of His bounty and whoever He wills goes to the Fire through His justice. Everybody acts in accordance with what is destined for him and goes towards what he has been created for.

84. Good and evil have both been decreed for people.

85. The capability in terms of divine grace and favor which makes an action certain to occur cannot be ascribed to a created being. This capability is integral with action, whereas the capability of an action in terms of having the necessary health and ability, being in a position to act, and having the necessary means, exists in a person before the action. It is this type of capability which is the object of the dictates of the Shari`a. Allah the Exalted says: "Allah does not charge a person except according to his ability." (al-Baqara 2: 286)

86. People's actions are created by Allah but earned by people .

87. Allah, the Exalted, has only charged people with what they are able to do and people are only capable of doing what Allah has granted them to do. This is the explanation of the phrase: "There is no power and no strength except by Allah." We add to this that there is no stratagem or way by which anyone can avoid or escape disobedience to Allah except with Allah's help; nor does anyone have the strength to put obedience to Allah into practice and remain firm in it, except if Allah makes it possible for him to do so.

88. Everything happens according to Allah's will, knowledge, predestination and decree. His will overpowers all other wills and His decree overpowers all stratagems. He does whatever He wills and He is never unjust. He is exalted in His purity above any evil or perdition and He is perfect far beyond any fault or flaw. "He will not be asked about what He does, but they will be asked." (al-Anbiya' 21: 23)

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89. There is benefit for dead people in the supplication and alms-giving of the living.

90. Allah responds to people's supplications and gives them what they ask for.

91. Allah has absolute control over everything and nothing has any control over Him. Nothing can be independent of Allah even for the blinking of an eye, and whoever considers himself independent of Allah for the blinking of an eye is guilty of unbelief and becomes one of the people of perdition.

92. Allah is angered and He is pleased but not in the same way as any creature.

93. We love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah but we do not go to excess in our love for any one individual among them; nor do we disown any one of them. We hate anyone who hates them or does not speak well of them and we only speak well of them. Love of them is a part of Islam, part of belief and part of excellent behavior, while hatred of them is unbelief, hypocrisy and rebellion.

94. We confirm that, after the death of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, the caliphate went first to Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, thus proving his excellence and superiority over the rest of the Muslims; then to `Umar ibn al-Khattab; then to `Uthman; and then to `Ali ibn Abi Talib; may Allah be well pleased with all of them. These are the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and upright leaders.

95. We bear witness that the ten who were named by the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and who were promised the Garden by him, will be in the Garden, as the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, whose word is truth, bore witness that they would be. The ten are: Abu Bakr, `Umar, `Uthman, `Ali, Talha, Zubayr, Sa`d, Sa`id, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf, and Abu `Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah whose title was the Trustee of this Community, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

96. Anyone who speaks well of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his wives and offspring, who are all pure and untainted by any impurity, is free from the accusation of hypocrisy.

97. The learned men of the Predecessors, both the first community and those who immediately followed: the people of virtue, the narrators of hadith, the jurists, and the analysts-- they must only be spoken of in the best way, and anyone who says anything bad about them is not on the right path.

98. We do not prefer any of the saintly men among the Community over any of the Prophets but rather we say that any one of the Prophets is better than all the awliya' put together.

99. We believe in what we know of the karamat or marvels of the awliya' and in the authentic stories about them from trustworthy sources.

100. We believe in the signs of the Hour such as the appearance of the Antichrist *(dajjal)* and the descent of `Isa ibn Maryam, peace be upon

him, from heaven, and we believe in the rising of the sun from where it sets and in the emergence of the Beast from the earth.

101. We do not accept as true what soothsayers and fortune-tellers say, nor do we accept the claims of those who affirm anything which goes against the Book, the Sunna, and the consensus of the Muslim Community *(umma)*.

102. We agree that holding together is the true and right path and that separation is deviation and torment.

103. There is only one religion of Allah in the heavens and the earth and that is the religion of Islam ("submission"). Allah says: "Surely religion in the sight of Allah is Islam." (Al `Imran 3: 19) And He also says: "I am pleased with Islam as a religion for you." (al-Ma'ida 5: 3)

104. Islam lies between going to excess and falling short, between the likening of Allah's attributes to creation *(tashbih)* and divesting Allah of attributes*(ta`til)*, between determinism and freewill, and between sureness and despair.

105. This is our religion and it is what we believe in, both inwardly and outwardly, and we renounce any connection, before Allah, with anyone who goes against what we have said and made clear.

We ask Allah to make us firm in our belief and seal our lives with it and to protect us from variant ideas, scattering opinions and evil schools of view such as those of the Salafis, Mushabbiha, the Mu`tazila, the Jahmiyya, the Jabriyya, the Qadariyya, and others like them who go against the Sunna and Jama`a and have allied themselves with error. We renounce any connection with them and in our opinion they are in error and on the path of destruction. We ask Allah to protect us from all falsehood and we ask His Grace and Favour to do all good.

For more references and a full bibliography of books used to compile this treatise please visit darultahqiq.com.

Any typos and mistakes of any kind is solely from the author and any good within this book is from Allah,